Vipassanā Meditation

Lectures on Insight Meditation

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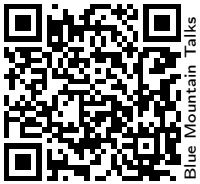

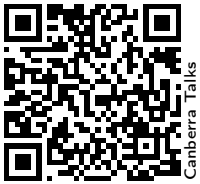

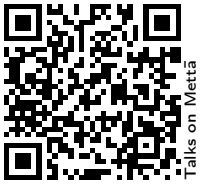

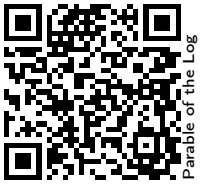

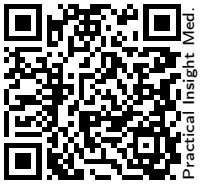

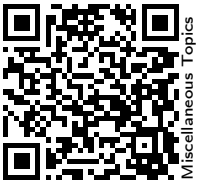

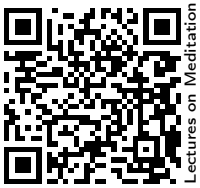

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Preface

Sudassam vajjamannsam
Attano pana duddasam.

Easily seen are other's faults
Hard indeed to see are one's own[1].

This statement is very relevant for meditators (yogis). A yogi may keep making the same mistakes, and yet remain blind to them, until someone experienced enough comes along and points them out. Again, after some time, we may forget and need to be reminded.

From the 30th March to 8th April 1983, we were very fortunate to have a very experienced *vipassanā* master to hold a retreat at the Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Centre, Penang, to guide, teach, correct and remind us regarding *vipassanā* meditation. We have all benefited greatly by his precise instructions, strict discipline, and encouraging words.

Here we have a compilation of them for the benefit of all seekers of uttermost security from bounds. They are the evening lectures delivered by the Saydaw U Janakabhivamsa for the yogi's benefit. Some are instructions taken mainly from interviews between the Sayadaw and the yogis. They have been arranged according to their various items to be made into a comprehensive booklet. Some statements are applicable only to

[1] Dhpd. 252

those situations concerned and should not be taken too generally.

Special thanks to the Sayadaw for allowing us to print this book and proofreading it himself.

We are also grateful to all who have helped to make this book possible.

Venerable Sujiva,
June 1985

Acknowledgement

It is my great pleasure that we can publish this new edition of *Vipassanā* Meditation which so far has been printed three times in Malaysia and Myanmar. We are deeply grateful to the Venerable Bhikkhu Sujiva for his tireless efforts to compile and edit my lectures and instructions given for the benefit of yogis in the retreat I conducted in Penang, Malaysia in April 1983.

This new edition was made during my Dhamma-tour in the West in 1992. Bhikkhu Pesala of the Burmese Vihara, London, rendered me invaluable assistance in this respect. Royce Wiles, my student in meditation, has polished the language in the manuscript that was entered onto computer by U Dhammāsubha, a Malaysian Bhikkhu, Maung Aung Gyi, and Maung Zaw Myint Oo. I thank them all a great deal.

Ashin Janakabhivamsa,
Chanmyay Sayadaw
November 5, 1992.

Happiness through Right Understanding

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhasa

Everybody in the world wants happiness and peace. This is the reason why people are seeking the true path which leads them to the cessation of suffering. All kinds of religions in the world arise because of this search. One of the great religions in the world is Buddhism. It leads people to the cessation of suffering.

The Cause of Suffering

Lord Buddha found out the cause of suffering (*dukkhā*). According to his teachings, everything arises dependent on conditions. Everything in the world has its cause; nothing arises without a cause. In order to get rid of suffering the Buddha had to find the cause of it. When the cause was eradicated, there wouldn't be any effect. When the Omniscient Buddha became enlightened, he discovered that the cause of suffering was attachment (*taṇha*). The word "*taṇha*" means greed, lust, desire, craving, and the like. Buddhist scholars have translated "*taṇha*" into attachment, so that it covers all forms of desire. In English, we use the word "attachment" for "*taṇha*".

Taṇha, or attachment, is the cause of suffering. When there is *taṇha*, there is *dukkhā* (suffering). When a man can eliminate *taṇha*, he is sure to get rid of dukkhā. This *taṇha* also arises dependent on a cause. Without a cause *taṇha* will not arise. *Taṇha* is a mental state and a process of mentality which is conditioned. The Omniscient Buddha discovered that the cause of attachment (*taṇha*) is wrong view, i.e.: the false view of a soul, a self, an "I", or a "you", a personality or an individuality known as *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* or *atta-diṭṭhi*. This *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* or *atta-diṭṭhi* is the cause of *taṇha* which causes *dukkhā*. Then, what is the cause of this false view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi* or *atta-diṭṭhi*)?

The Omniscient Buddha pointed out that ignorance (*mohā* or *avijjā* in Pāli) of the natural processes of mentality and physicality is the cause of the false view of a soul or a self. Thus, by realisation or right understanding of this dual process in its true nature, we can exterminate ignorance. Then we come to know the law of cause and effect. We can summarise the chain of cause and effect like this: Ignorance is the cause, false view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi* or *atta-diṭṭhi*) is the effect. False view is the cause, attachment is the effect. Attachment is the cause, suffering is the effect.

Then, what we come to know is: if mental and physical processes are rightly understood, that right understanding will do away with ignorance. When ignorance has been eradicated, there will not be any false view of a soul, a self, a person, or a being. When this false view has been destroyed, there will not arise any attachment at all. When attachment has been destroyed, there will not arise any suffering. Then we reach a stage in which all suffering ceases to exist—the cessation of suffering (*nirodhā-saccā*) is attained.

The Cause of False View

We should consider how ignorance of the mind-body processes causes the false view of a soul or a self, a person or a being, an "I",

or a "you", and how this false view causes attachment to arise. It is because we do not rightly understand this dual process in its true nature that we consider it as a person or a being, a soul or a self. Then, that person, that being, that "I", or that "you" has a desire to be rich, or to be a king, a queen, a president, a prime minister or a millionaire. This desire to be a queen or a president etc., is attachment. It arises through the false idea of a person or a being, a soul or a self, an "I", or a "you".

If we want to exterminate this desire or attachment, then we must destroy its cause. What is the cause? The cause of desire or attachment is, as I have explained earlier, the false view or false concept of a person or a being, a soul or a self. So, when the false view has been destroyed, there will not arise any attachment to become a rich man, a king, a president, and so on. The desire to be, to get, to have something arises through false view or the false concept of a person or being, an "I", or a "you". When that desire or attachment arises in us, it brings about all kinds of suffering.

When we are attached to our house, a non-living thing, we are worried about our house. If our house is on fire, we feel sad. Sadness is one of the main kinds of suffering. That suffering is caused by our attachment to our house. Then again, when we are attached to our relatives, to our friends, to our children, or to our parents; this attachment also causes us to suffer. When we are attached to our children, we worry about our children's health, education, and so on. When our children fail their examinations, we are worried, we feel sorry and sad. This suffering is mental suffering or mental *dukkhā*, and is caused by attachment to our children. So, attachment (*taṇha*) is the cause of suffering. Where does this attachment come from? This attachment comes from the false conception of bodily and mental processes as a person or a being, a soul or a self, an "I", or a "you".

When this concept of personality and individuality has been destroyed, there will not be any attachment. When there is no attachment, there will not be any suffering.

See it as it is

The Omniscient Buddha pointed out that by being mindful of this dual process as it really is, we are able to rightly understand its intrinsic nature. When we want to understand something as it really is, we should observe it, watch it, be mindful of it as it really occurs, without analysing it, without logical reasoning, without philosophical thinking, and without pre-conceptions. We should be very attentive and mindful of it as it really is.

For example, look at a watch. When we do not observe a watch very attentively and carefully, we cannot understand it as it is. When we observe it very attentively and closely, then we see its brand, its design, and the figures on it. We come to understand that this is a watch, its brand name is Seiko; it has an international time chart etc. However, if we do not observe it as it is, or if our observation is combined with preconceived ideas such as, "I have seen such a watch before and its brand name is Omega", then, as soon as we see this watch, we will take it to be an Omega. Why? Because we do not observe it attentively and closely. We have used the preconceived idea when we saw it, so the preconceived idea leads us to the wrong conclusion regarding the watch. If we put the preconceived idea aside and just observe it attentively and closely, we will understand it as it is—this is a Seiko, it is made in Japan, it also has an international time chart. We will understand it as it is because we had put aside our preconceived idea of "Omega" when we observed it.

In the same way, when we want to rightly understand the mind-body processes in their true nature or as they really are, we must not analyse them or think about them. We must not reason, use any intellectual knowledge, or preconceived idea. We must leave them aside and pay bare attention to what is happening to the mind-body phenomena as they really are. Then, we can see our mind-body processes as they really are. When our body feels hot, we should note that feeling of heat as "heat". When the body feels cold, we should note it as "cold". When we feel pain,

we should note it as "pain". When we feel happy, we should note that happiness. When we feel angry, we should note that anger as "anger". When we feel sorrow, we should be mindful of it as "sorrow". When we feel sad or disappointed, we should be aware of our emotional state of sadness or disappointment as it is.

Each and every mental and physical process must be observed as it really occurs so that we can rightly understand it in its true nature. This right understanding will lead us to the removal of ignorance. When ignorance has been removed, then we do not take the mind-body process to be a person, a being, a soul or a self. If we take this mind-body process to be just a natural process, then there will not arise any attachment. When the attachment has been destroyed, we are free from all kinds of suffering and have attained the cessation of suffering. So, mindfulness of mind-body processes in their true nature is the way leading to the cessation of suffering. That is way the Omniscient Buddha delivered a discourse on "The Four Foundations of Mindfulness".

In this discourse, the Omniscient Buddha teaches us to be mindful of mental and physical phenomena as they really are. There are many ways by which we have to be mindful of the mind-body processes but they can be summarised as follows:

1. Mindfulness of bodily processes (*kayanupassanā satipatthāna*).
2. Mindfulness of feeling or sensation (*vedannupassanā satipatthāna*).
3. Mindfulness of consciousness (*cittanupassanā satipatthāna*).
4. Mindfulness of mind-objects (*dhammanupassanā satipatthāna*).

Choiceless Awareness

When we are mindful of our mind-body processes, we do not need to choose any mental or physical process as the object of our meditation. The mind will choose the object by itself. If we choose any mental or physical process as the object of meditation, it means we are attached to it. During meditation, the "noting mind" or the "observing mind" will choose the object by itself; perhaps a feeling of happiness about our success, a painful sensation, or the abdominal movement. Though we try to focus the mind on the abdominal movement, the mind does not stay with it if the pain is more distinct or more prominent. The "noting mind" will go to the pain and observe it, because the more distinct feeling draws the mind very strongly to it. So we need not choose the object but should observe the object that the mind chooses. When pain disappears through attentive and close awareness, the mind will then choose another object which is more distinct. If an itchy sensation on the back is more distinct or more pronounced than the abdominal movement, the mind will go to the feeling of itchiness and observe it as "itching, itching, itching". When the itchy sensation has disappeared by means of strong mindfulness and deep concentration, the mind will choose (for example) the abdominal movement as its object because it is more distinct then the other objects. If happiness is more distinct than the abdominal movement, the mind will choose happiness as its object and observe it as "happy, happy, happy". So the principle of *vipassanā* meditation or mindfulness meditation is to observe, to watch, or to be mindful of, all mental or physical phenomena as they really are. This mindfulness meditation is not only very simple and easy, but also very effective in achieving our goal—the cessation of suffering.

When we are taking food, we should be aware of every action, every activity involved in the act of eating. When we stretch out our arm, we must be aware of the movement of stretching. When the hand touches the spoon or the rice, the touching sen-

sation must be observed. When we hold the spoon, the sensation of holding must he observed. When we dip the spoon into the curry, that dipping movement must be observed. When we scoop curry with the spoon, that movement must be observed. In this way, each and every action involved in the act of eating must be observed as it is because every physical process must be thoroughly realised so as to remove ignorance, which is the cause of false view. In the same way, while we are taking a bath, while we are working in the office or at home, we must be aware of all the actions or movements involved. When practising walking meditation in a retreat, the movements of the foot such as the lifting movement, the pushing movement, and the dropping movement must be closely and precisely observed as they really are.

Labelling

We may need labelling or naming when we are mindful of any object. When we lift our foot to walk, we should label it as "lifting". When we push it forward, we should label it as "pushing". When we drop it, we should label it as "dropping", in this way "lifting, pushing, dropping—lifting, pushing, dropping". Labelling or naming can lead the mind to the object of meditation closely and precisely. It is also very helpful for a meditator to focus his mind on the object of meditation. However, there may be some meditators who need not label or name the object of meditation. Instead, they just observe it. They should just observe the movement of the foot—from the very beginning of the lifting movement up to the end of the dropping movement. The mind must follow the movement of the foot very closely as it is, without thinking or analysing. In this way, one can develop concentration more deeply than ever.

At the beginning of the practise, the mind wanders very often. Whenever the mind wanders, you should follow the mind

and observe it. If you are thinking about your family affairs, that thought must be observed as it is, making a mental note, "thinking, thinking, thinking". After the initial thought has disappeared, you should resume your walking and noting as usual, "lifting, pushing, dropping".

Samatha and *Vipassanā*

Here, we should know the difference between *samathā* meditation and *vipassanā* meditation. *Samatha* means concentration, calmness, tranquillity. When the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation, it becomes calm and tranquil. The purpose of *samathā* meditation is to attain deep concentration of the mind on a single object. So, the result of *samathā* meditation is the attainment of deep concentration such as absorption (*appanna samādhi, jhāna*) or access concentration (*upacara-samādhi*). When the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation, all defilements such as lust, greed, hatred, desire, conceit, ignorance, and so on, are kept away from the mind which is absorbed in the object. When the mind is free from all defilements or hindrances, we feel calm, tranquil, happy, and peaceful. The result of *samathā* meditation, therefore, is some degree of happiness through the attainment of deep concentration such as absorption (*appana samādhi, jhāna*) or access concentration (*upacara-samādhi*) but it does not enable us to rightly understand the mental and physical phenomena as they really are.

A *samathā* meditator has to make some device or *kasiṇa* as the object of meditation. For instance, to make a colour *kasiṇa*, he has to make a red circle on the wall about two feet from the floor in accordance with the Visuddhimagga commentary. He must make a red circle about the size of a plate and the colour must be of pure red, even, and smooth. When the device has been made, he has to sit on the floor about two feet from the wall, look at the red circle, and concentrate on it. Should the mind wander,

he must not follow the mind, but must bring it to the object of meditation, i.e., the red circle. He must focus the mind on the red circle and observe it as "red, red, red". This is the way of *samathā* meditation in brief.

As for *vipassanā* meditation, the purpose is to attain the cessation of suffering through rightly understanding mental and physical processes in their true nature. For this, we need some degree of concentration. This concentration can be attained through constant and uninterrupted mindfulness of the mind-body process. Thus, we have a variety of objects of meditation: happiness is an object of meditation and so is anger, sorrow, painful sensation, stiffness, numbness, and so on. Any mental or physical process can be the object of meditation.

The purpose and the results of *samathā* and *vipassanā* meditation are different, as are the methods.

We should go back to what I explained earlier. When we walk, we observe the movement of the foot—the lifting, pushing, and dropping. At the beginning of the practise, our mind is not well concentrated on the foot. When the mind wanders, we have to follow it and observe it as it is until that wandering mind has disappeared. Only after it has disappeared, we note the movement of the foot as usual. When the mind becomes well concentrated on the movement of the foot, what we note is the movement of the lifting, pushing, and dropping and we must not be aware of the form of the foot or the form of the body during walking. When the foot is being lifted, the mind notes it as "lifting", when the foot is being pushed forward, the mind notes is as "pushing", when the foot being is dropped, the mind notes it as "dropping". When we come to realise them as natural processes of movement, we also come to realise the mind that notes them. The lifting movement is one process, and the mind that notes it is another process. The pushing movement is one process, and the mind that notes it is another process. In this way, we thoroughly realise the two processes of mental phenomena and physical phenomena. We rightly understand this dual pro-

cess as just natural processes of mental and physical phenomena. We do not take them to be a person, a being, an "I", or a "you". Then, there will not arise any false concept of personality, individuality, soul, or self. When this false concept has been destroyed, there will not arise any attachment or desire which is the cause of suffering (*dukkhā*). So, because attachment does not arise, there will not arise any *dukkhā* which is actually the result of the attachment. We attain the cessation of suffering at the moment of experiencing the process of the movement the lifting, pushing, and dropping movement as just a natural process.

As we proceed, our mindfulness becomes more constant, uninterrupted, and powerful. As the mindfulness becomes constant and powerful, concentration becomes deeper and stronger. When concentration becomes deep and strong, our realisation or penetrating insight into mental processes and physical processes becomes clear. So, we come to realise many series of lifting movements arising and passing away one after another, many series of pushing movements arising and passing away one after another, and many series of dropping movements arising and passing away one after another. During such an experience, we come to understand that no part of the process is permanent or everlasting. Every process of movement is subject to impermanence (*aniccā*)—arising and passing away very swiftly. It is not a good process; it is bad. Then, we come to realise one of the three characteristics of the mental and physical process, i.e., *dukkhā*. When we realise the impermanent and suffering nature of this physical process of movement, then we do not take it to be an everlasting entity—a person, a being, a soul, or a self. This is the realisation of the *anattā*, no-soul, no-self, non-ego nature of bodily and mental processes. So we realise the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena, impermanence (*aniccā*), suffering (*dukkhā*), and no-soul or no-self (*anattā*).

Realisation of the Noble Truths

In this manner, a meditator goes through all the stages of insight knowledge of mental and physical processes one after another. After the last stage has been reached, he has attained enlightenment of the first path, *sotāpatti-maggā*. At the moment of attaining the first path, the meditator realises the Four Noble Truths:

1. *Dukkha-saccā*—the Truth of Suffering
2. *Samudaya-saccā*—the Truth of the Cause of Suffering
3. *Nirodha-saccā*—the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
4. *Magga-saccā*—the Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

When he realises the ever changing phenomena of mentality and physicality, it means that he has realised the Truth of Suffering. As a result, attachment, which is the cause of suffering, is removed and the meditator has reached the state in which suffering ceases to exist.

The Noble Eightfold Path

At that moment, he has completely developed the Noble Eightfold Path:

1. *Samma-diṭṭhi*—right understanding
2. *Samma-saṅkappā*—right thought
3. *Samma-vāca*—right speech
4. *Samma-kammantā*—right action
5. *Samma-ājīva*—right livelihood
6. *Samma-vāyama*—right effort
7. *Samma-sāṭī*—right mindfulness
8. *Samma-samādhi*—right concentration

From the time he can concentrate the mind to a large extent on the object of meditation, i.e. mental-physical processes, he is developing this Noble Eightfold Path (though not completely). How? When he focuses the mind on the movement of the foot,

he has to make a mental effort; that mental effort is "right effort" (*samma-vāyama*). Because of that mental effort, he can focus his mind so that he can be mindful of the movement of the foot. That mindfulness is "right mindfulness" (*samma-sāṭī*) because it leads him to the right understanding of the mental and physical processes. When his mind is focused on the movement of the foot, it is concentrated on it for a moment, but when the concentration becomes continuous and constant, stronger and deeper, that concentration is "right concentration" (*samma-samādhi*). In the beginning of the practise, it is natural for the mind to wander. However much effort a meditator makes, the mind does not stay with the movement of the foot at first. Then, one of the mental states which arises together with the mindfulness of the movement of the foot leads the mind to the object of meditation, i.e., the movement of the foot. That mental state which leads the mind to the object of meditation is "right thought" (*samma-saṅkappā*). The characteristic of "right thought" is the directing of the mind to the object of meditation. In this way, the mind becomes well concentrated on the object of meditation, the movement of the foot. Then, it penetrates into the true nature of the physical process of the movement, knowing it as a natural process. That knowing or that understanding of it as a natural process is "right understanding" (*samma-diṭṭhi*). Thus we have developed five mental factors of the Noble Eightfold Path when we are mindful of the movement of the foot. These are:

1. *Samma-vāyama*—right effort
2. *Samma-sāṭī*—right mindfulness
3. *Samma-samādhi*—right concentration
4. *Samma-saṅkappā*—right thought
5. *Samma-diṭṭhi*—right understanding

These five mental factors are included in mindfulness of the mind-body processes as they are. While engaged in mindfulness meditation, we abstain from wrong speech, wrong action, and wrong livelihood. Abstention from wrong speech means "right speech" (*samma-vāca*); abstention from wrong actions means

"right action" (*samma-kammantā*); abstention from wrong livelihood means "right livelihood" (*samma-ājīva*). So we have all the eight mental factors of the Noble Eightfold Path while we are being mindful of any mental or physical process. As we develop the Noble Eightfold Path, we can remove false view (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi* or *atta-diṭṭhi*) by the power of right understanding (*samma-diṭṭhi*), one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. So, when a meditator enters the First Path, *sotāpatti-maggā*, he has completely developed the Noble Eightfold Path, *maggā-saccā*, the way leading to the cessation of suffering. This is how he has realised the Four Noble Truths by means of cultivating mindfulness of mental and physical processes in their true nature.

Preliminary Instructions for Meditators

In the teachings of the Buddha, there are three kinds of training:

1. Training in moral conduct (*sila*)
2. Training in concentration (*samādhi*)
3. Training in wisdom, insight or enlightenment (*paññā*)

When we practise moral conduct, it means to have restraint in speech and actions, i.e. observing at least the five or eight precepts as laymen, and for the Sangha (community of monks) the 227 precepts or rules of training known as the Patimokkha. When we abstain from unwholesome actions and speech, we observe these precepts completely.

When we observe the five precepts, we have to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, and using any kind of intoxicant.

The first precept, abstention from killing, means refraining from unwholesome actions. The second precept, abstention from stealing and illegal possession of things not given by the owner, means refraining from unwholesome actions. It is the same with the third and fifth precept, i.e., abstention from sexual misconduct and intoxicants. The fourth precept, abstention from telling lies is refraining from false and unwholesome speech. Therefore, if we refrain from unwholesome speech and actions, our *sila* is fully observed.

During a meditation retreat, you have to observe the eight precepts so that you can have more time to devote to meditation.

The sixth precept means abstention from taking food after noon (until dawn the next morning). Although you must refrain from taking any kind of food during these hours, you can take honey and certain kinds of fruit juice such as orange and lemon juice.

To observe the seventh precept, you must refrain from dancing, singing, playing, and listening to music and adorning yourself with anything which will beautify yourself such as using flowers, perfumes, and so on.

The eighth precept is abstention from high and luxurious beds.

When observing eight precepts, the third precept refers to abstention from any kind of sexual contact, not just from sexual misconduct. By refraining from these activities, your speech and action are pure. These are the eight precepts you will have to observe during your retreat.

Observing eight precepts means purification of moral conduct—*sila-visuddhi*. *Sila-visuddhi* is a prerequisite for a meditator to make progress in meditative practise. When moral conduct is purified, one never feels guilty. When one does not feel guilty, one's mind becomes steady. Thereby one can easily attain deep concentration of mind (*samādhi*) which, in turn, gives rise to insight wisdom (*paññā*).

What is *Vipassanā*?

Vipassanā is a Dhamma term which is a combination of two words, "*vi*" is one word, "*passanā*" is the other. Here, "*vi*" refers to the three characteristics of mentality and physicality, i.e. impermanence. (*aniccā*), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkhā*), and no-soul, no-self or non-ego (*anattā*)

"*Passanā*" means right understanding or realisation through deep concentration, or right understanding of the three characteristics of mentality (*nāma*) and physicality (*rūpa*). When we practise *vipassanā* meditation or mindfulness meditation, the purpose is to realise *aniccā, dukkhā* and *anatta*—the three characteristics of phenomena.

By realising these three characteristics of mentality and physicality, we can exterminate every defilement such as lust, greed, desire, craving, hatred, ill-will, jealousy, conceit, sloth, and torpor, sorrow and worry, restlessness and remorse. Having destroyed all these defilements, we then attain deliverance or the cessation of suffering. As long as we have any of these defilements, we are sure to experience many kinds of *dukkhā* (suffering). Defilements (*kilesas*) are the cause of suffering. Therefore, when defilements have been destroyed, all kinds of suffering cease to exist.

Mindfulness of the Four Elements

During the practise, we must observe each and every mental and physical process which is arising at the moment. In the beginning of the practise, we must contemplate the abdominal movements as instructed by the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. Contemplation of the abdominal movements is in accordance with the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta, the Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. In that discourse, there is a chapter concerning mindfulness of the four elements. There the Buddha teaches us to be mindful of the four elements when they arise: *pathavi-dhatu*—earth element, *apo-dhatu*—water element, *tejo-dhatu*—fire element, and *vayo-dhatu*—wind element. Not only these four elements, but all mental and physical phenomena must be observed.

We must understand that the earth element is not actually earth. Instead it refers to the true nature of the earth element.

Earth element is the name given to its individual characteristics, such as hardness and softness. The scriptures say, "Hardness and softness are the individual or specific characteristics of the earth element"—so when you thoroughly realise hardness or softness in any part of your body, it means that you are realising the true nature or individual characteristic of the earth element (*pathavi-dhatu*).

The water element is not actually water, but the term given to the individual characteristics of the element. Fluidity and cohesion are characteristics of the water element (*apo-dhatu*). When you realise the nature of fluidity or cohesion in any part of your body, it means you are realising the water element. Similarly, the fire element is not really fire, but the specific characteristic of the element. Heat and cold are the specific characteristics of the fire element (*tejo-dhatu*). The wind element (*vayo-dhatu*), likewise, is not wind, but the term given to the specific characteristics of the wind element, that is, movement, motion, vibration, or support in any part of your body. When you feel, realise, and rightly understand this moving, motional, vibrating, or supporting nature in any part of your body, it means that you are realising the wind element. This is mindfulness of the four elements.

The Omniscient Buddha said, "Any mental or physical process must be observed as it is". When we sit in any comfortable position and focus our mind on the mental and physical processes, we may not know which object must be observed first. So, to overcome this difficulty, the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw instructed his meditators to begin with the abdominal movements. When we breathe in, the abdomen rises, when we breathe out, the abdomen falls. We should focus our mind on the abdominal movement. When the abdomen rises, we should note it as "rising", and when it falls as, "falling". In this way: "rising, falling—rising, falling". Thus we can feel the inward and outward movement of the abdomen. The specific characteristics of *vayo-dhatu* must be thoroughly realised by meditators, so that

they can destroy the false view of a person, a being or a soul. They must observe the inward and outward movements of the abdomen or the rising and falling movements of the abdomen, making mental notes of "rising, falling—rising, falling".

During the contemplation of your abdominal movement, when you hear a sound which is loud enough to be noted, you should note, "hearing, hearing, hearing". At the beginning of the practise, you may not overcome it, so you should note "hearing, hearing" as much as possible. When you think it is enough for you to stop, then you should return to the primary object, the abdominal movement. Sometimes, the sound may last for a second or two. Then, when the sound has disappeared, your mind will naturally go back to the primary object, "rising" and "falling", which you should note as usual.

Mindfulness of Mental and Emotional States

When you feel happy or unhappy, or when you feel sorry and sad, these emotional states must be observed as they really are, mentally noting, "happy, happy", "unhappy, unhappy", or "sad, sad", and so on. After the emotional state has disappeared, the noting mind naturally returns to the abdominal movement, which should be observed as usual. When your mind goes out and thinks about your work, your family or your relatives, you must leave the abdominal movement alone and observe the wandering thoughts, making a mental note "thinking, thinking". You should be careful at this point. When you observe any mental state or emotional state, your noting mind must be energetic, attentive, precise, and somewhat quick so that it becomes continuous, uninterrupted, and constant. When the noting mind becomes powerful, the thought or idea, or the thinking mind "stops" by itself. Then the noting mind no longer has the object to note. It naturally returns to the abdominal movement which should be noted as usual.

Walking Meditation

The Buddha said that mindfulness must be applied to the four postures of the body, i.e., walking, standing, sitting, and lying down.

1. While you are walking, you must be mindful of it as it is.
2. While you are standing, you must be mindful of it as it is.
3. While you are sitting, you must be mindful of it as it is.
4. While you are lying down, you must be mindful of it as it is.

So, in every posture, there must be mindfulness.

We instruct meditators to practise walking and sitting meditation alternately so that they can concentrate more easily and hence attain insight into the walking and sitting processes. Every session of sitting must be preceded by walking because in walking meditation, the movement of the foot is more distinct than the abdominal movement while sitting. When your meditation practise matures, you may need practise sitting meditation for a longer period than walking. When you have reached the sixth stage of insight knowledge, you may practise sitting meditation longer than walking. You may sit for two or three hours and walk one hour. At that stage, your concentration is good, deep, and strong enough to realise the dissolution of *nāma* and *rūpa* (mental and physical phenomena). But in the beginning of the practise, you need to do walking meditation longer than sitting, because you are not yet able to sit for long but can walk longer. You can attain some degree of concentration more easily in walking than in sitting.

So, first of all, you should practise walking meditation by being aware of stepping. When you make a left step, note it as "left". When you make a right step, note it as "right". In this way, note "left, right—left, right", or just "stepping, stepping". Labelling or naming is not as important as the mind that observes the movement of the foot. You should lay stress on awareness, sharp awareness, of the movement of the foot.

When you practise walking meditation, you must not close your eyes. Instead, your eyes must be half-closed (that means, relax and keep your eyes normal) and you should look at a place on the floor about four or five feet in front of your foot.

You must not bend your head too low. If you bend your head too low, you will soon feel tension in your neck or shoulders. Also, you may have a headache or dizziness. You must not look at your foot. If you look at your foot, you cannot concentrate well on the movement. Nor must you look around here and there. Once you look around, the mind goes with the eyes; then your concentration breaks. You may have a tendency or desire to look around when you feel that someone is coming towards you or passing in front of you. That tendency or desire to look around must be very attentively observed and noted as "tendency" or "wanting to look" until it has disappeared. When the tendency or desire has disappeared, you won't look around. Then you can maintain your concentration. So, please be careful not to look around, so that you can maintain your concentration and make progress in your attainment of concentration by walking meditation. Your hands should be locked together in front or behind of you. If you feel you should change the position of your hands, you may do so, but mindfully.

When you have an intention to change position, you should note "intending, intending". Even then, you should change the position very slowly and every action and movement involved in the act of changing must be observed. You must not be unmindful of any movement or action. When you have changed the position of your hands, you should continue to note the movements of the foot as before.

In sitting meditation too, those who have some experience in meditational practise should sit at least 45 minutes without changing position. Beginners should sit at least 20-30 minutes without changing position. If a beginner is unable to bear the severe pain which arises, he may feel like changing his posture. Before doing so, he must note the intention to change posture,

as "intending, intending". Then, he should change his posture very, very slowly, being aware of all the movements and actions involved in the changing of postures. When he has changed his posture, he should then return to the abdominal movement, the primary object, and note as usual.

Silent Awareness

In a meditation retreat, you must not do any action or movement quickly. You must slow down all actions and movements as much as possible, so that you can apply mindfulness to every minute movement or action of the body. At home, you need not slow down all these actions and movements, but they should rather be normal, and mindfully observed. All actions and movements must be mindfully noted as they really are. That is general mindfulness. On retreat, you must slow down all actions and movements, because you have nothing else to do except to be mindful of all your mental and physical activities. You must not talk, except for the few words which are necessary in your daily routine, but these few words should also be spoken slowly and softly so that your words do not disturb the concentration of other meditators. You should do everything with very little noise or without any noise. You must not make a sound by walking sluggishly and heavily. If you are mindful of the movements of your feet, you won't make any sound when walking.

You must be mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind. You must be aware of any activity of your mind and body as it really is. As you are eating, you must be mindful of all the actions and movements in eating. When you are taking a bath, dressing or drinking water, you must slow down all your actions and observe the movements. When you sit down, you should do it very slowly, being aware of the whole movement of sitting. When you stand up, that must also be done very slowly by being aware of the movement, because we want to realise every men-

tal or physical process in its true nature. All mental and physical processes are ever-changing—appearing and disappearing, arising and vanishing. We want to realise this true nature of mental and physical processes. Therefore, we should slow down all actions and movements.

Mindfulness and concentration will pave the way for insight to unfold. When mindfulness becomes continuous, concentration naturally becomes deeper. When concentration becomes deeper, insight will unfold by itself. Therefore, we should strive to have constant and continuous mindfulness.

Seven Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

Seven benefits of Mindfulness meditation as taught by the Buddha are recorded in the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta, the Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. But before I deal with them, I want to explain to you briefly the four aspects of Buddhism. These four aspects are:

1. Devotional aspect of Buddhism,
2. Ethical aspect of Buddhism,
3. Moral aspect of Buddhism,
4. Practical aspect of Buddhism (including the experiential aspect).

Devotional Aspect

The devotional aspect of Buddhism means "rites and rituals", the chanting of *suttas* and *parittas*, offering of flowers and incense, as well as the offering of food and robes. When we perform such good deeds, We do so with *sraddha* (in Sanskrit) or *saddha* (in Pāli).

The word *saddha* is difficult to translate into English. There is no English equivalent for the Pāli word "*saddha*". If we translate *saddha* to be faith, the word "faith" does not cover the real sense, and if we translate it as "confidence", it also does not cover the

real sense of "*saddha*". We cannot find a single word in English which can give a complete meaning of *saddha*. To me, "*saddha*" can be taken to mean "belief through right understanding of the Dhamma".

When we perform religious ceremonies, we do it with a belief in the Triple Gem (*tiratana*). We believe in the Buddha, the Dhamma (his teachings), and the Sangha (the order of buddhist monks). We hold the view that the Buddha has eradicated all defilements through his supreme enlightenment, so he is worthy of respect (an Arahant). He was a Buddha because he had strived and was enlightened by himself, not because he learned the Dhamma from any teacher. We believe in the Buddha in this way. The Buddha taught us to live happily and peacefully and he taught us the way leading to the cessation of all kinds of suffering. We believe that if we follow his teaching or his way, we are sure to live happily and peacefully and to get rid of suffering. For this reason, we believe in the Dhamma. In the same way, we believe in the Sangha. When we say Sangha, it mainly means the *ariya-sangha*, the Noble Ones who have attained any one of the four stages of the Path (*maggā*). But in the general sense, it also refers to the *samutti-sangha* (those who are still striving to eradicate the defilements). Thus, we pay homage to the Triple Gem (*tiratana*)—the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. We also believe that by chanting *suttas* and *parittas* as taught by the Buddha, we perform meritorious deeds which will be conducive to the cessation of suffering. Performing these meritorious deeds forms the devotional aspect of Buddhism. However, we should not be content with this devotional aspect if we want to enjoy the essence of Buddhism and be free from all kinds of suffering. Therefore, we must proceed to practise the higher aspects.

Ethical Aspect

The second aspect of Buddhism is the ethical aspect. This is following the Buddha's teaching regarding our actions, speech, and mental purification. There are many doctrines concerned with the ethical aspect of Buddhism.

By following these doctrines, we can lead a happy life in this existence as well as the next, but we cannot get rid of suffering totally yet. The ethical aspects of Buddhism are:

1. Refraining from all kinds of evil deeds,
2. Performing meritorious or good deeds,
3. Purifying the mind from all kinds of defilements.

These are the three parts of the ethical aspect of what the Omniscient Buddha has taught us, and they are the exhortations of all the Buddhas. If we follow these doctrines, we can lead a happy and peaceful life because Buddhism is based on the law of cause and effect. If we refrain from all kinds of evil deeds, we will not suffer any bad results.

As to the purification of mind from defilements, we have to practise *samathā* meditation as well as *vipassanā* meditation. With *samathā* meditation, our mind can be purified only while it is engaged in the meditative practise, but when it is not, defilements will attack us again. If we purify our minds through the realisation of the mind-body processes in their true nature, the defilements will not return. Realisation, or insight into mental and physical phenomena, is known as *vipassanā-ñana* (insight knowledge). It overcomes some aspects of defilements and reduces defilements such as greed, anger, delusion, and so on. Certain defilements which have been destroyed by means of *vipassanā-ñana* (penetrative insight) will not be able to attack us again. In other words, when we have experienced insight knowledge, that experience will not disappear or go away from us. When we reflect on the experience we have had during meditation, the insight that we attained comes to us again, and with this insight, some aspects of defilements abandoned by insight will not arise

again. Thus, we can purify our minds from some defilements. But if we have enough *saddha*, we will put forth greater effort in our practise and attain the Fourth Path, Arahantship. Then we can exterminate every defilement. When the defilements have been totally destroyed and the mind completely purified there will not arise any dukkhā or suffering. Suffering ceases to exist. This purification of the mind from defilements is concerned with the practical aspect of Buddhism, whereas the former two points are concerned with the ethical aspect of Buddhism.

There is the Mangala Sutta[2] with 38 kinds of blessings. In the suttas are many ethics to follow which enable us to live happily and peacefully such as:

> You should live in a suitable place where you can be prosperous in every aspect, having done meritorious deeds in the past.
>
> You should do meritorious deeds as much as possible at present too.
>
> You must watch your deeds, speech, and mind properly.

That means, we should keep our deeds, speech, and thoughts free from defilements. In this way, we have many aspects of ethics to follow, so that we can live happily and peacefully.

I want to remind you of the Ambalatthika Rahulovadasutta[3], which may be familiar to you. In that sutta, the Buddha encouraged his son, Rahula, who was a seven year old samanera, to live properly, happily, and peacefully. The Buddha taught Rahula to stop and reflect whenever he had the intention of doing something:

> Rahula, you must be mindful of what you are going to do and consider whether this deed will be harmful to yourself or to others. By considering thus, if

[2] Sutta-nipata, verses 258-269

[3] Majihima-nikaya, Sutta No. 61

> you find that this deed will be harmful to yourself or to others, you must not do it. But if this deed will not be harmful to yourself or to others, you may do it.

In this way, the Buddha instructed Rahula to consider what is to be done, to be aware of what is being done, and to reflect on what has been done. So this ethic too is the best way for living happily and peacefully in our daily life. There are innumerable aspects of ethics conducive to a happy and peaceful life. If we try to understand these ethics and follow them, we are sure to live a happy and peaceful life, although we cannot yet get rid of all our suffering.

Moral Aspect

Though these ethics are very conducive to a happy and peaceful life, we should not merely be contented with the second aspect of Buddhism. We should proceed to a higher aspect of Buddhism, the third, the moral aspect. In the moral aspect, you must observe precepts, either five, eight, ten, or 227. The ten precepts are for novices (*Samaneras*) while the 227 rules are for monks (Bhikkhus). In daily life, we must observe at least the five precepts. When we can observe the five precepts perfectly, our morality is purified. When moral conduct is purified, a meditator can easily practise meditation, either *samathā* or *vipassanā* meditation. Based on purification of moral conduct, a meditator can easily concentrate on the object of meditation and gain deep concentration, whereby the mind is clear, serene, and happy.

Practical Aspect

Next, we have the fourth aspect, i.e., the practical aspect of Buddhism. We must practise meditation so that we can deliver our-

selves from defilements and, as a result, attain the cessation of all kinds of suffering. Here, we practise two kinds of meditation which make up the practical aspect of Buddhism—one to enable us to attain deep concentration, and the other one to enable us to attain the cessation of suffering through the realisation of mentality and physicality in their true nature. The Buddha stressed the second type of meditation—*vipassanā* meditation. When we practise *vipassanā* meditation, we have to follow the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta, the discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. If we apply mindfulness to all our mind-body processes, we are sure to attain the cessation of suffering. The Buddha described the four Foundations of Mindfulness when he gave the discourse on Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta in the Kuru province.

Seven Benefits of Meditation

In the introductory passage of that Sutta, the Buddha explained the seven benefits which a meditator can gain through his own experience of Dhamma.

The first benefit is purification. When a person practises mindfulness, he can purify his being from all defilements. The Pāli word "*kilesā*" may be familiar to you. The word "*kilesā*" is translated as "defilements" by Buddhist scholars. The *kilesās* are of ten main kinds:

1. *Lobha*
2. *Dosa*
3. *Moha*
4. *Ditthi*
5. *Mana*
6. *Vicikiccha*
7. *Thina-middha*
8. *Uddhacca-kukkuccā*
9. *Ahirika*

10. *Anottappa*

Lobha means not only greed, but also desire, lust, craving, attachment, and love. When one of these mental states arises in us, our mind gets defiled. So, these are known as defilements.

Dosa is hatred, anger, ill-will, or aversion.

Moha is delusion or ignorance.

Ditthi is wrong view or false view.

Mana is conceit.

Vicikiccha is sceptical doubt.

Thina-middha is sloth and torpor. Sleepiness also comes under sloth and torpor. Sloth and torpor are "old friends" of meditators and also those who listen to the Dhamma.

Today, during interview, all the meditators reported the experience: "I am tired, I feel sleepy". At the beginning of the practise, we have to struggle because we have not yet become accustomed to the task of mindfulness meditation. This is a critical stage of meditation, but it will not last long. It may last for two or three days. After three days, all meditators will be all-right. They will not find it too difficult to overcome these "old friends" which are obstructing their progress in concentration as well as insight.

Uddhacca kukkuccā means restlessness and remorse.

Ahirika means moral shamelessness. One who is not ashamed of evil deeds in speech, thought, and action.

Anottappa means moral fearlessness—that one is not afraid of evil deeds in speech, thought, and action.

These are the ten kinds of defilements which must be abandoned or removed from our minds by means of *vipassanā* meditation. The Buddha says:

> If one practises mindfulness meditation, one can be purified from all defilements.

That means, that one can attain Arahantship when one is completely purified from all kinds of defilements. This is the first benefit.

The second benefit of mindfulness is the overcoming of sorrow and worry.

You will not be worried about failure, or be sorry about the death of your relatives, or about the loss of your work. You will not be sorry about anything if you practise this mindfulness meditation. Although you have not attained any Path and Fruition (*maggā* and *phāla*), you can overcome sorrow and worry to some extent, because when sorrow or worry arises, you will be mindful of it as it is. When mindfulness becomes powerful, that worry or sorrow will stop and disappear. When you have completely developed mindfulness meditation, you are sure to attain Arahantship, and hence be free from worry and sorrow permanently. In this way, worry and sorrow can be overcome by mindfulness meditation.

The third benefit is that of overcoming lamentation. Although your parents, children, or relatives die, you will not have any lamentation for them because you have fully realised that mental and physical processes constitute the so-called "child" or the so-called "parents". In this way, lamentation can be overcome by mindfulness meditation. Regarding the third benefit, the commentary on the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta mentions a story:

A woman, named Patācārā, whose husband, two sons, parents and brothers had died within a day or two, went mad due to sorrow, worry, and lamentation. She was overwhelmed by sorrow over the death of the people she loved.

One day, the Buddha was giving a discourse to an audience at the Jetavana monastery near Savatthi. Then this mad woman, who was going for a stroll, went into the monastery and saw the audience listening to the discourse. She approached the audience. An old man, who was very kind to the poor, took off his upper robe, threw it to the woman and said to her, "Dear daughter, please use my robe to cover your body". At the same time the Buddha said to her, "Dear sister. Be mindful". Because of the soothing voice of the Buddha, the mad woman came to her

senses. Then she sat at the edge of the audience and listened to the discourse. The Buddha, knowing that she had come to her senses, aimed his discourse at her. Listening to the discourse given by the Buddha, the woman's mind gradually absorbed the essence of the doctrine. When her mind was well prepared to realise the Dhamma, the Buddha expounded the Four Noble Truths:

1. *Dukkha-saccā*—The Truth of Suffering
2. *Samudaya-saccā*—The Truth of the Cause of Suffering
3. *Nirodha-saccā*—The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
4. *Magga-saccā*—The Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

The Fourth Noble Truth includes advice on how to be mindful of whatever arises in our mind and body as it really is.

Patācārā, having come to her senses, rightly understood the technique of mindfulness, applied it to whatever arose in the mind-body processes and to whatever she heard. As her mindfulness gained momentum, her concentration became deeper and stronger. Because her concentration became deep, her insight and penetrating knowledge of the mind-body processes became powerful, and she gradually realised both the specific characteristics and common characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. Thus she progressively experienced all the stages of insight knowledge while listening to the discourse, and attained the First Path, *sotāpatti-maggā*. Through her own personal experience of the Dhamma by means of mindfulness meditation, the sorrow, worries, and lamentation she had had, totally disappeared from her mind, and she became a "new woman". Thus she overcame her worry, sorrow, and lamentation by means of mindfulness meditation. This is what the commentary on the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta mentions. Not only during the time of the Buddha, but also nowadays people can overcome sorrow and worry if they practise this mindfulness meditation and attain some higher stages of insight. You are included in those who

can overcome sorrow and worry by means of mindfulness meditation.

The fourth benefit is the cessation of physical suffering.

The fifth benefit is the cessation of mental suffering.

Physical suffering, such as pain, stiffness, itchiness, numbness, and so on can be overcome by this mindfulness in meditation retreats as well as in daily life. When you have some experience in the meditation practise, you can overcome your mental and physical suffering to a large extent. If you invest enough effort and time you can exterminate both mental and physical suffering permanently when you attain Arahantship. But during meditation, you can overcome pain, stiffness, numbness, itchiness, and all kinds of unpleasant physical sensations by observing them very attentively and closely. Therefore, you need not be afraid of pain, stiffness, or numbness, because these are your "good friends" who can help you to attain the cessation of suffering. If you observe the pain energetically, precisely, and closely, it may seem more severe because you know it more and more clearly. When you have comprehended the unpleasantness of this painful sensation, you will not identify it with yourself because the sensation is perceived as just a natural process of mental phenomena. You are not attached to the painful sensation as "I", or "mine", or "me", or a "person", or a "being". In this way, you can eradicate the wrong view of a soul, a self, a person, a being, an "I", or a you.

When the root of all kinds of defilements, i.e. *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* or *atta-diṭṭhi* has been destroyed you are sure to attain the First Path, *sotāpatti-maggā*. Then you can proceed with your practise to attain the three higher stages of the Path and Fruition. That is why I say that unpleasant physical sensations, such as pain, stiffness, and numbness, are your "good friends" who can help you to attain the cessation of suffering. In other words, this numbness or any painful sensation is the key to the door of Nibbāna. When you feel pain, you are lucky. Pain is the most valuable object of meditation because it attracts the "noting mind" to stay

with it for a very long time. The "noting mind" can concentrate on it deeply and be absorbed in it. When the mind is completely absorbed in the painful sensation, you will no longer be aware of your bodily form or yourself. It means you are realising the *sabhava-lakkhaṇa* of the pain or the individual characteristic of the painful sensation (*dukkhā-vedāna*). Proceeding with the practise, you will be able to realise the common characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and the no-soul or no-self nature of mental and physical phenomena. Then that will lead you to the cessation of all kinds of sufferings. So, you are lucky if you have pain.

In Burma, some meditators, having passed the third stage of insight knowledge (*sammasana-ñana*), almost completely overcame all painful sensation and are dissatisfied with their practise because they have no pain to note. They fold their legs under themselves and press them, so that they can get pain. They are looking for their "good friend" who can lead them to the cessation of suffering.

When you feel unhappy, please observe that unhappiness insistently, attentively, and very closely as "unhappy, unhappy". If you feel depressed, that depression must be observed very attentively and perseveringly. When your mindfulness becomes powerful, the unhappiness and depression will cease to exist. So the overcoming of mental suffering is the fifth benefit of mindfulness meditation.

The sixth benefit is the attainment of enlightenment, the Path and Fruition (*maggā and phāla*). When you devote enough time and effort to your mindfulness meditation, you will attain at least the First Path, *sotāpatti-maggā*. This is the sixth benefit of mindfulness meditation.

The seventh benefit is that you are sure to attain Nibbāna, deliverance, emancipation through mindfulness meditation.

The seven kinds of benefits of mindfulness meditation which the *vipassanā* meditator can gain through personal experience of Dhamma:

1. Purification from all kinds of defilements.
2. Overcoming sorrow and worry.
3. Overcoming lamentation.
4. Cessation of all kinds of physical suffering.
5. Cessation of all kinds of mental suffering.
6. Attainment of enlightenment.
7. Attainment of Nibbāna.

The Buddha began the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta with these seven benefits of mindfulness meditation. You are sure to acquire these seven benefits if you put strenuous effort into your practise.

We are lucky because we believe in the Buddha who is enlightened and who teaches the right way which leads to the cessation of suffering. But we should not be complacent. In the Pāli texts, there is a simile:

> There is a great pond full of clear water with many lotus flowers in it. A traveller's hands are dirty. He knows that if he washes them in the pond, they will be clean. But though he knows it, he does not go to the pond to wash his hands, his hands are still dirty. In this way, he passes the pond and continues his journey.

Then the question is asked: "If the man remains dirty, who is to be blamed, the pond or the traveller?" Obviously, the traveller. Though he knew he could wash the dirt away in the pond, he did not do it. Therefore, the traveller is to be blamed. The Buddha teaches us the way of mindfulness. If we know the way, but do not practise this mindfulness meditation, we will not get rid of suffering. If we do not get rid of suffering, who should be blamed? The Buddha, the way of mindfulness, or us? Yes, we should be blamed. If you practise this mindfulness meditation with strenuous effort, you will purify yourself from all defilements and get rid of suffering by obtaining these seven kinds of benefits of mindfulness meditation.

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

When the Buddha had explained the seven benefits of mindfulness, he continued to explain the Four Foundations of Mindfulness:

1. *Kāyānupassanā satipatthāna*
2. *Vedanānupassanā satipatthāna*
3. *Cittānupassanā satipatthāna*
4. *Dhammānupassanā satipatthāna*

Kayanupassanā satipatthāna means contemplation of the body or mindfulness of any bodily process as it occurs.

Vedananupassanā satipatthāna means contemplation of feeling or sensation. This feeling or sensation is of three types:

1. pleasant feeling or sensation,
2. unpleasant feeling or sensation,
3. neutral feeling or sensation.

Pleasant feeling or sensation is called *sūkha-vedāna* (*sūkha* means pleasant, *vedāna* is feeling or sensation). Unpleasant sensation or feeling is called *dukkhā-vedāna* in Pāli (*dukkhā* here means unpleasant). Neutral feeling or sensation is called *upekkhā-vedāna* (*upekkhā* means neutral—neither pleasant nor unpleasant). When pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling or neutral feeling arises, a meditator must be mindful of it as it is. Some meditators think that unpleasant feeling should not be observed because it is unpleasant. Actually, all kinds of feeling must be

noted very attentively as they really occur. If we do not observe or note the pleasant or unpleasant feeling or sensation, we are sure to become attached to it or repulsed by it. When we like a particular feeling or sensation, we become attached to it. That attachment, or *taṇha*, arises dependent on the feeling or sensation. In this case, the pleasant feeling is the cause and attachment is the effect.

If a meditator practises strenuously and perseveringly, his concentration will become deep and strong. When the meditator's concentration becomes deep and strong, he feels happy and experiences rapture, because his mind is, at that moment, quite free from all defilements such as greed, hatred, delusion, conceit, and so on. The persevering meditator has attained a very good stage of insight because his mind is now calm, tranquil, and serene. If the meditator enjoys it and is satisfied with what he is experiencing, it means he is attached to it, and thus he cannot progress to higher stages of insight. Such an experience can be attained in the first part of the fourth stage of insight. If he understands this, he should just observe the experience he has attained at this stage. Whatever he is experiencing at this stage, he will not become attached to it if he observes his experience very attentively and energetically. When the meditator notes it attentively and persistently, that happiness, tranquillity, or serenity will not manifest very distinctly in his mind.

What he realises at that moment is just feeling that arises and passes away. Then another feeling arises and passes away. He cannot differentiate between pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Thereby he becomes detached from his experience and proceeds to practise for a higher stage of insight. Only then can he go beyond this stage of insight.

If a meditator walks very mindfully, noting the six parts of the step:

- lifting of the foot,
- raising of the toes,
- pushing the foot forward,

- dropping it down,
- touching, and
- pressing,

as a result, his concentration is good, deep, and strong, he will not be aware of the form of the foot. Nor is he aware of the body or bodily form. What he knows is just movement of the foot. The movement may also feel light; he may feel as if he is walking in the air. He may feel as if he is lifted in the sky. At this stage, he is experiencing excellent meditational experiences. If he does not observe these experiences mindfully, he will like them and may desire more of them. He may become very satisfied with his practise and he may think this is Nibbāna (the cessation of all kinds of suffering), because this is the best experience he has ever had. All this happens, because he does not observe his pleasant experiences, and so becomes attached to them. This attachment arises depending on the pleasant feeling or pleasant sensation about his good experience.

If a meditator enjoys this pleasant feeling or sensation about his good experience without being mindful of it, he is sure to become attached to it. So, he should observe and be aware and mindful of whatever experience he encounters at this stage. He must not analyse it or think about it, but must be aware of the experience as it really occurs, in order to realise that this experience of the mental process or mental state is subject to impermanence. Whenever he notes, he finds that the experience is not everlasting. When the "noting mind" becomes constant, sustained, and powerful, it penetrates into the nature of his experience, i.e. the mental state. The mind begins to realise that the experience has disappeared. Whenever it arises, the mind notes it, and it disappears again. Then he concludes that this pleasant feeling together with his experience is impermanent (*aniccā*), because he has comprehended the nature of impermanence through his personal experience of the dhamma. Here, dhamma means mental as well as physical processes. Because he has realised that the pleasant feeling or sensation together

with the good experience is impermanent, he is not be attached to it. Attachment will not arise when the meditator rightly understands the true nature of good mental states or a good experience.

Chain of Cause and Effect

When attachment does not arise, grasping or *upādāna* will not arise. When grasping does not arise, there will not be any wholesome or unwholesome actions, verbal, physical, or mental. The action that is caused by grasping is known as *kammā-bhāva*. This may be wholesome or unwholesome. Wholesome bodily action is *kusalā kāya-kammā*. Unwholesome bodily action is *akusalā kāya-kammā*. Wholesome verbal action is *kusalā vaci-kammā*. Unwholesome verbal action is *akusalā vacikamma*. Wholesome mental action is *kusalā māno-kammā*. Unwholesome mental action is *akusalā māno-kammā*. These actions or *kammās* arise through the grasping which is the result of attachment to pleasant or unpleasant feeling or sensation.

When any bodily, verbal, or mental action is carried out, it becomes a cause. This cause has its result which may occur in this life or future lives. So, in this way, a being is reborn again through his wholesome or unwholesome action. That action is caused by the grasping which has attachment as its root. Attachment, in turn, is conditioned through feeling or sensation, *vedāna*. In this way, he has to be reborn in another existence to experience a variety of suffering, because he did not observe his pleasant feelings together with his experience.

Therefore, if a meditator thinks that feelings should not be observed, he will be carried away along the chain of Dependent Origination (*paticcasamuppada*) to be reborn in the next existence, and suffer from a variety of *dukkhā*. That is why the Buddha teaches us to be mindful of any feeling or sensation whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

Mindfulness of Feeling

Mindfulness of sensation or contemplation of sensation is known as *vedananupassana satipatthāna.* Usually, at the beginning of the practise, the meditator feels the unpleasant physical sensations as well as mental sensations. Here we need to explain again the two kinds of sensation:

1. *Kayika-vedāna*
2. *Cetasika-vedāna*

If the feeling or sensation arises depending on physical processes, it is known as *kayika-vedāna.* We may translate it as physical feeling or sensation, or bodily feeling or sensation. If the feeling or sensation arises depending on mental processes, it is called *cetasikā-vedāna.* We may render it as mental feeling or mental sensation. Actually, every feeling, every sensation is a mental process, not a physical process. However, sometimes feeling or sensation arises depending on the physical process of discomfort. When a meditator feels discomfort in his body, unpleasant sensation arises. That unpleasant sensation is called *kayika-vedāna* because it arises depending on physical processes.

In the beginning of the practise, a meditator in general mostly experiences unpleasant mental and physical sensations. But, whatever sensation he may experience, he must observe it very attentively, energetically, and precisely so that he can realise the true nature of that feeling or sensation. The specific and the general characteristics of the feeling must be thoroughly realised, so that he will not be attached to it or repulsed by it. This is *vedānanupassa satipatthāna*, mindfulness of feelings or sensations. Whenever feeling arises, it must be observed and noted as it really occurs.

It is natural for a meditator to be afraid of unpleasant physical sensation which he experiences in his meditation practise, but painful sensation is not a process that should be feared. Pain is a natural process that should be thoroughly understood by being aware of it as it really occurs. When a meditator can observe

pain successfully with persistent effort, he can realise its true nature—the specific and general nature of pain. Then the penetrating insight into the true nature of that pain or unpleasant sensation will lead the meditator to the higher stages of insight. Eventually, he can attain enlightenment by means of this painful sensation.

Mindfulness of Consciousness

The third foundation of mindfulness is *cittanupassa satipatthāna*, which means mindfulness of consciousness and the states (*cetasikā*) that arise with consciousness. According to the Abhidhamma, every "mind", so to say, is composed of consciousness and its concomitants. Concomitants here mean its associates. Consciousness never arises independently. It arises together with its associates. In short, whatever consciousness or whatever "mind" or mental state arises, must be mindfully noted or observed as it really occurs. This is *cittanupassanā satipatthāna*. The mental states may be good, the emotional states may be better. Whatever it may be, it must be noted as it really occurs. Therefore, when you have consciousness with lust or attachment, you must be mindful of it as it really is. If you have consciousness with anger, you must note it as consciousness with anger. Consciousness with anger may be noted as "angry" or "anger" in accordance with the Mahā Satipathana Sutta. When mindfulness is powerful, the anger will disappear. Then the meditator will realise that anger is not everlasting—it arises and passes away. By observing anger, a meditator has two benefits:

1. The overcoming of anger.
2. Realisation of the true nature of anger (the arising and passing away of anger or the *aniccā* nature of anger).

Anger is one of the mental states that can lead the meditator to the cessation of suffering if he notes it with mindfulness.

Mindfulness of Dhamma

The fourth foundation of mindfulness is *dhammanupassanā satipatthāna*, which means contemplation of *dhamma*. Here *dhamma* includes many categories of mental or physical processes. The first category is the five *nīvaraṇa* (hindrances):

1. **Kamacchanda.** Sense desire—desire for visible objects, sounds, odours, tastes, and tangible objects.
2. **Vyapada.** Anger or ill-will.
3. **Thina-middha.** Sloth and torpor, sleepiness, mental dullness, heaviness.
4. **Uddhacca-kukkuccā.** Remorse, worry, or unhappiness about past deeds. Unhappiness about having failed to do what should have been done in the past is the first aspect. The second aspect is unhappiness about having done what you did, though you should not have done it, i.e., an unwholesome deed, which will produce a bad result.
5. **Vicikiccha.** Doubt.

As long as the mind is defiled, a meditator cannot realise any mental process or physical process. Only when the mind is well concentrated on the object of meditation (either mental or physical processes), is it free from all kinds of defilements or hindrances. Then the mind becomes clear and penetrative; so penetrative that it realises the true nature of mental and physical processes as they really are. Whenever any one of the five hindrances arises in a meditator's mind, he must be aware of it. For example, when a meditator hears a sweet song from outside and does not note it, he may have a desire to listen to the song. He likes to hear this song repeatedly and he indulges in it. The desire to listen to the song is sense desire—*kāmacchanda*. So, when he hears any sweet song, he must note "hearing, hearing". Still, he may be overwhelmed by the song if his mindfulness is not powerful enough. If he knows that this sense desire for the song can lead him to undesirable events or accidents, or can be an obstacle to his progress in meditation, he will note it as "desire,

desire" until it has been destroyed by strong mindfulness. When the mindfulness becomes constant and strong, that desire will disappear. The desire disappears because it has been observed very attentively and energetically. When a meditator observes, or is mindful of his sense desire as it really is, mentally noting, "desire, desire", he is following strictly what the Buddha taught in the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta. Being mindful in this manner is *dhammanupassanā satipatthāna* or the contemplation of mind objects, i.e. contemplation of the hindrances (*nivaranas*).

Thina-middha, sloth and torpor, actually means sleepiness. Sloth and torpor is a very "old friend" of meditators. When a meditator feels sleepy, he enjoys it. If any other pleasant sensation arises in him, he is able to observe it. But when sleepiness arises in him, he is unable to be aware of it because he likes it. That is why sloth and torpor or sleepiness are an "old friend" of a meditator. It makes him stay longer in the cycle of rebirth. If he is unable to observe sleepiness, he cannot overcome it. Unless he has realised the true nature of sloth and torpor or sleepiness, he will be attached to it and enjoy it.

When we are sleepy, we should make more strenuous effort in our practise; that means we must observe more attentively, energetically, and precisely, so that we can make our mind more active and alert. When the mind becomes active and alert, it is free from sleepiness. Then we have overcome sleepiness.

Uddhacca-kukucca is the fourth hindrance. *Uddhacca* is restlessness or distraction, *kukucca* is remorse. Here, *uddhaccā* means distraction of the mind, restlessness of the mind, wandering of the mind. When the mind wanders or thinks about something else instead of noting the object of meditation, it is *uddhaccā*. When your mind wanders, you must be aware of it as it really is. In the beginning of the practise a meditator may not be able to observe it. He does not even know that the mind is wandering. He thinks the mind is staying with the object of meditation, i.e., the abdominal movements or respiration. When he is aware that the mind has wandered, he must note "wander-

ing, wandering" or "thinking, thinking". That means *uddhaccā-kukkuccā* is observed.

The fifth hindrance is *vicikiccha*, or doubt. You may have doubt about the Buddha the Dhamma, the Sangha, or about the technique of meditation. Whatever doubt arises, it must be very attentively observed, you must be mindful of it as it really is. This is known as *dhammanupassanā satipatthāna*, mindfulness of *dhamma*. So these are the four foundations of mindfulness:

1. *Kayanupassanā satipatthāna*—contemplation of the body or physical phenomena.
2. *Vedananupassanā satipatthāna*—contemplation of feeling or sensation.
3. *Cittanupassanā satipatthāna*—contemplation of consciousness together with its concomitants or associates.
4. *Dhammānupassanā satipatthāna*—contemplation of dhamma or mind objects.

The Seven Stages of Purification

To attain enlightenment we must go through seven stages of purification (*visuddhi*).

Purification of Moral Conduct

The first is *sīla-visuddhi*, purification of moral conduct. Meditators have to observe at least five precepts, if not eight, so that they can attain purification of *sīla*. The third of the five precepts is abstention from sexual misconduct, whereas the third of the eight precepts is abstention from all kinds of sexual contact. If a meditator does not abstain from sexual contact, his mind will be defiled by the hindrance of sense desire (*kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa*). Only when the mind is purified from all hindrances can meditators realise mental and physical processes in their true nature.

Of course it is better if meditators observe the eight precepts. If they do not, they may have desires for tastes, food, visible things, audible things, odours, and tangible things—five kinds of sense desire (*kammacchanda*) in their mind. By observing eight precepts, one can purify one's deed and speech, which is purification of moral conduct (*sīla-visuddhi*). When moral conduct is purified, the mind is also purified to some extent.

When the mind becomes purified, it becomes calm, serene, tranquil, and happy and can concentrate on the object of meditation. Then the meditator attains purification of mind, i.e. *cittā-visuddhi*, the second stage of purification.

When Venerable Uttiya, one of the disciples of the Buddha was sick in bed, the Buddha visited him and asked about his health. Venerable Uttiya told the Buddha about his sickness:

> Venerable sir, my sickness is not decreasing but increasing. I do not know whether I can live till the end of today or tomorrow or not. So, I want to meditate to destroy all kinds of defilements through to the fourth stage of enlightenment, Arahantship, before I die. Please give a short instruction which will enable me to develop my meditation practise to attain Arahantship.

The Buddha answered:

> Uttiya, you should cleanse the beginning. If the beginning is purified, then you will be all-right, i.e., able to attain Arahantship.

The Omniscient Buddha asked the question:

> What is the beginning?

He himself replied:

> Herein the beginning is purified moral conduct or *sila* and right view (*samma-diṭṭhi*). Right view means the acceptance of, and belief in, the law of cause and effect (action—reaction) or the law of *kammā.*

The Omniscient Buddha continued:

> Uttiya, you should cleanse your moral conduct and right view. Then, based on the purified moral conduct or *sila*, you should develop the four foundations of mindfulness. Practising thus, you will attain the cessation of suffering.

The Omniscient Buddha laid stress on the purification of *sila* or moral conduct because it is a basic requirement for progress in concentration as well as insight. When moral conduct is purified, the mind becomes calm, serene, and happy. If he cultivates mindfulness, he can easily concentrate on any object of the mental and physical processes. So, purity of moral conduct is a prerequirement for a meditator to make progress.

Purification of Mind

The second purification is purification of mind (*cittā-visuddhi*). If we want to attain insight knowledge, the mind must be purified from all kinds of defilements. When the mind is well concentrated on any mental or physical phenomena, it is free from all these hindrances. This is known as purification of mind—*cittā-visuddhi*. With this purification, the mind can penetrate into the mental and physical processes in their true nature. First of all, he distinguishes between mental processes and physical processes (*nāma* and *rūpa*) through his own experience. That is known as *namarupariccheda-ñana*—knowledge of the difference between mentality and physicality.

Purification of View

The third is purification of view (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*). When a meditator penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical processes, he does not take them to be a person or a being, a soul

or a self. Then he has purified his view, he has attained *diṭṭhi-visuddhi.*

Purification by Overcoming Doubt

The fourth is purification by overcoming doubt (*kankhavitarana-visuddhi*). "*Kankha*" means doubt, "*visuddhi*" means purification by overcoming doubt. When a meditator has attained the second stage of insight knowledge—knowledge of cause and effect (*paccayapariggaha-ñana*), he no longer has doubts about his past existence. Thus, he overcomes doubt. This is purification by overcoming doubt.

To attain this knowledge, he has to observe every intention, wish or want before every action or movement. All actions are preceded by intention, wishing or wanting. That is why we have to be mindful of every intention before every action or movement. When we have an intention to lift our foot, we should note it as "intending, intending", then "lifting, lifting". When we have an intention to bend our arm, we should note "intending, intending", then "bending, bending". When we have an intention to open our mouth to take food while we are eating, first of all we should note, "intending, intending", then "opening, opening". In the act of opening the mouth, the intention is the cause, and the opening of the mouth is the effect.

Without wishing or wanting to come here, could you have come here? Then, what is the cause and what the effect? The act of coming is the effect, the intention is the cause. Then, why do you sit on the chair? Yes, it is the intention that made you sit on the chair. Is there any sitter? If you think there is a person who sits on the chair, then we should bring a corpse from the hospital and make it sit on the chair. It cannot sit down, because there is no intention to sit down. It is only intention, the mental process, that causes an action or movement. Is the sitting posture a man or a woman, a Samanera or a Bhikkhu? It is none of these. In the

sitting posture, there is a physical process supported by the wind element (*vayo-dhatu*—the internal and external wind element). Sitting is a physical process.

If we want to sit down, first of all, we have to note "intending, intending", then "sitting, sitting, sitting". All the sitting down movements must be observed after we have noted, "intention". When we bend our arm, we must, first of all, note the intention, then the movements of bending the arm. When we stretch out our arm, first of all, we must note intention, then the movements of stretching as "stretching, stretching, stretching". When our concentration is deep enough, by being aware of intention and the actions that follow it, we come to realise that nothing arises without a cause. Everything arises depending on a cause.

Therefore, a so-called person, a man or a woman, is just the process of cause and effect. There is no doer, no one that does anything. If we believe that there is a person who does the sitting, it is called *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* or *atta-diṭṭhi* (wrong view of a doer). If we thoroughly realise the cause and effect relationship, what we realise is just a natural process. Then there is no "person" that wants to become a president, there is no "person" that wants to become a king. Then what existed in the past? In the past, there existed only the process of cause and effect. Then we have no doubt about our past existence. In this way, we can overcome doubts about our past existence. This is known as purification by overcoming doubt (*kankhavitarana-visuddhi*).

Some meditators find it difficult to observe intention before every action, because they are not patient enough. To observe, we must be patient with our actions or movements so that we can observe the intention before every action or movement. When we observe intention before lifting our foot, we will come to realise how the intention is related to the lifting of the foot. Then, again, when we observe intention before the pushing of the foot, we will come to realise how intention is related to the pushing movement of the foot. When we observe the intention before the dropping of the foot, we will also come to realise how the inten-

tion is related to the dropping movement of the foot, and so on. When we come to realise this relationship of cause and effect, we have almost completely realised the Law of Cause and Effect. By this realisation we overcome doubt as to whether there is any personality or entity which is everlasting in us. What really exists is just the process of cause and effect.

Purification of Knowledge and Vision of Path and Non-Path

The fifth *visuddhi* is purification of knowledge and vision of path and non-path (*maggamagga-ñanadassanavisuddhi*). In this stage of insight, you get very good experiences: lightness, happiness, tranquillity, serenity etc. Sometimes you may feel your body has become light, as if it has been lifted, or as if you were flying in the sky. Your mindfulness is very keen. Your effort is steady, neither slack, vigorous, nor rigid. Your effort is moderate, steady, and firm. Your concentration is deep, so you experience peace, calmness, serenity, tranquillity, happiness, rapture, and so on. This is a very good stage that meditators must go through. This stage may be experienced in about two weeks if meditators practise strenuously, but some meditators go through this stage within a week. With such good experiences, a meditator may think "This must be Nibbāna—this is great, I have never experienced it before, it is better than having a million dollars—now I have attained Nibbāna". Thus, he does not go further because he is clinging to it. He thinks that if he goes further, he will go beyond Nibbāna. If a meditator holds that this stage is Nibbāna, this is the wrong path. Therefore, he must continue to meditate and practise strenuously. This is only a very minor and trivial experience, and he should not be content with it, but must go ahead with his practise.

Purification of Knowledge and Vision of the Course

The sixth *visuddhi* is *patipada ñanadassana-visuddhi*. "*Patipada*" means the course of practise, "*ñana*" means knowledge, "*dassanā*" means vision. "*Ñana*" and "*dassanā*" are here referred to in the same sense. In order to lay emphasis on penetration, the text used the two words in the same sense—knowledge and vision. So *patipada-ñanadassana-visuddhi* means purification of knowledge and vision of the course of practise. It means that when we have passed *maggamagga-ñanadassanavisuddhi*, we are on the right path which leads to Arahantship or the cessation of suffering.

If we were on the wrong path, we would stop at *maggamagga-ñanadassana-visuddhi*. Because we are on the right path, we have to go through the nine stages of insight and are approaching the goal, so we can judge that our course of practise is right. We do not have any doubt about the course of practise. That doubt has been destroyed by knowledge and vision of the course of practise. Then there is purification of knowledge and vision of the right course of practise *patipada ñanadassana-visuddhi*. When we reach that stage, we have attained *anuloma-ñana* (knowledge of adaptation) because our experience is in conformity with the lower the higher stages of insight.

Knowledge of Maturity

If we continue with our practise, we will come to the borderline in a short time. In two or three thought moments we have reached the line and stand on it. The border here means the border between an ordinary person (*puthujjana*) and a Noble One (*ariya*). When you are on the boundary, do you want to go ahead or go back? If you want to go back, your attention is towards the past, but if you want to go ahead your attention is ahead. Ahead

is the cessation of compounded thing, i.e., the cessation of all kinds of mentality (*nāma*) and physicality (*rūpa*). If you want to proceed, standing on the boundary or border, you look ahead as well as behind. Then you will know, "If I go ahead, all kinds of suffering will cease to exist. So should I go ahead?" You will think about it. The answer is yes, because you have been suffering for many aeons (*kappas*). The word "*kappa*" means countless numbers of existences. When you are at the boundary, you will reflect on your past experiences, "I have been suffering for countless existences in this cycle of *dukkhā*. I've had enough of this I must put an end to this suffering".

Your attention then is towards the cessation of suffering. That borderline knowledge is known as *gotrabhu-ñana*. "*Gotra*" means *puthujjana* or descendants. On this border, descendants of a *puthujjana* are cut off totally. Then there is no more *puthujjana*. Once you pass that borderline, you become a Noble One (*ariya*), because you have cut off the *puthujjana* lineage. Venerable Nyanaponika Thera translates it as maturity knowledge or knowledge of maturity, because the meditator's knowledge is mature enough to attain the path. Actually, we can translate it literally as the knowledge which has cut off the *puthujjana* lineage. When the *puthujjana* lineage has been cut off, the meditator has attained *sotāpatti-maggā-ñana*—he becomes a Noble One, an *ariya*.

Immediately after the borderline knowledge of maturity, there is path knowledge (*maggā-ñana*), which realises the Four Noble Truths thoroughly:

- *Dukkha-saccā*—The Truth of Suffering
- *Samudaya-saccā*—The Truth of the Cause of Suffering
- *Nirodha-saccā*—The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
- *Magga-saccā*—The Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

Purification of Knowledge and Vision

Because you realise these Four Noble Truths, your knowledge and vision of the Truths is purified. So this insight knowledge is known as *ñanadassana-visuddhi*, purification of knowledge and vision.

The seventh *visuddhi* refers to *sotāpatti-ñana*, the first knowledge of the path—*ñanadassana-visuddhi*. "*Ñana*" is knowledge, "*dassanā*" is vision, "*visuddhi*" is purification.

When you have attained the seventh *visuddhi* you have become a *sotāpanna*. "*Sota*" means stream; "*apanna*" means enterer. "*Sotapanna*" means stream-enterer. When you have attained *sotāpatti-ñana*, you have entered into the current of the Noble Eightfold Path. Only then have you attained *ñanadassana-visuddhi* purification of knowledge and vision.

Nine Ways to Sharpen the Mental Faculties

The five mental faculties of a meditator are *saddha, vīriya, sāṭī, samādhi*, and *pañña*. These five are known as *pancindriya* ("*panca*" means five, "*indriyā*" means faculties) as well as *pancabala* (five mental powers).

- ***Saddha*** means faith with right understanding or through right understanding.
- ***Vīriya*** means strenuous effort or energy.
- ***Sāṭī*** means mindfulness or sustained, constant mindfulness.
- ***Samādhi*** means deep concentration.
- ***Pañña*** means wisdom, insight or enlightenment.

For meditation, these five mental faculties must be strong, powerful, and balanced, as stated in the commentary on the Visuddhimagga. *Saddha* must be firm and unwavering, *sāṭī* must be powerful and strong, *samādhi* must be deep, and *pañña* must be penetrating.

Balancing the Mental Faculties

To make these five faculties strong, powerful, and balanced, there are nine guidelines which a meditator must follow. If these faculties are strong but not balanced, a meditator cannot attain

insight and enlightenment of the cessation of suffering. *Saddha* (faith) must be in balance with *paññā* (wisdom), and *samādhi* (concentration) must be in balance with *vīriya* (effort). The main mental factor, mindfulness, need not be in balance with any faculties; it must be constant, powerful, sustained, and uninterrupted.

If *saddha* is weak and *paññā* is powerful, a meditator may analyse his experience in the course of meditation. While experiencing a mental or physical process, he will analyse it, especially if he has a wide knowledge of the Dhamma. When he analyses his experience, that analytical knowledge impedes his concentration. Then his concentration will be broken or weakened. There is no room for logical reasoning or philosophical thinking or analysing which are not right understanding of the natural process of mental and physical phenomena. When a *dhamma* is not rightly penetrated, comprehended or realised, a meditator may have less faith or a disbelief in the doctrine as a result of his analytical knowledge of the *Dhamma* or experience. Only after he has completed the practise of meditation and experienced enlightenment, can he analyse it in any way. Then he will have unwavering confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha because of his experiential knowledge.

If a meditator believes in the Buddha or the Buddha's doctrine, his wisdom or insight knowledge is in balance with firm faith (*saddha*). Then he can proceed with his practise without any disturbance by analytical knowledge, reasoning, or philosophical thinking. Some meditators want to display their knowledge of Buddhism or Dhamma, so they sometimes analyse what they experience in their meditation and talk about something which is contrary to reality. According to the commentary on the Visuddhimagga, faith must be in balance with *paññā* (wisdom, insight knowledge) and *vice versa*.

When I first started mindfulness meditation, my purpose was to test the technique to see if it was right. Before I began mindfulness meditation, I went through two volumes of "Vipas-

sanā Meditation" written by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. At that time I had not met the Venerable Sayadaw personally.

However, the contemplation of the abdominal movement is very straightforward to those who have learnt the meditation technique from the book. I accepted the technique as true and correct because I knew that the abdominal movement is the wind element (*vayo-dhatu*) and the other three elements—the fire element (*tejo-dhatu*), the water element (*apo-dhatu*) and the earth element (*pathavi-dhatu*)—are also included in the abdominal movement. As we can contemplate the four elements, this technique must be correct.

Traditionally, we tend to favour the method of meditation on respiration or breathing meditation (*anapanasati*). I practised *anapanasati* in my days as a samanera when I was 17 to 24 years old. Though I now hold that the Mahasi Sayadaw's technique is correct, I could not accept it as satisfactory back then because I was clinging to the traditional method of mindfulness of respiration. That was why I wanted to test the Mahasi Sayadaw's technique which begins with the contemplation of the abdominal movement. Although I went to the Mahasi Meditation Centre and began to practise the technique, I did it with much doubt. That was in 1953 when I spent my *vassa* (rains) there for four months doing an intensive course of meditation. At that time, I was a lecturer at a Buddhist University in Mandalay. I practised under Venerable U Nandavamsa. He told me:

> U Janaka, you have gone through higher examinations and you are now a lecturer in the University. You must put aside your knowledge of the Dhamma from books if you want to achieve something out of this meditation.

Having accepted his advice, I put aside my knowledge and practised as advised by my teacher. As such, my faith was in balance with my wisdom because I did not analyse the experience

or the technique based on my preconceptions or the knowledge that I had learnt from books.

If *paññā* (wisdom) is weak and *saddha* (faith) is strong, a meditator may be credulous. We say he is credulous because he has faith without knowledge, wisdom or intelligence, and tends to believe easily any theory or doctrine. If a meditator is credulous, he may fall into a doctrine or theory which leads to the wrong path. Therefore, *saddha* must be in balance with *paññā*, knowledge or wisdom. In this way, *saddhindriya* and *pannindriya* must be in balance.

Then again, *samādhi* (concentration) and *vīriya* (energy) must be in balance. If *vīriya* is more powerful and stronger than *samādhi*, you cannot concentrate well on the object of meditation. The commentary says:

> If *vīriya* is stronger or more powerful than *samādhi*, a meditator's mind will become distracted and restless (*uddhaccā*).

In the beginning of the practise concentration is usually weak and often wanders. So, he should follow the mind and watch it as it is. If a meditator is enthusiastic for the achievement of insight, he may put too much effort in his practise, thereby causing the mind to become distracted and restless. Effort must be kept in balance with *samādhi*. To do this, he must reduce his effort, keeping his mind stable and steady, noting whatever arises in his mind and body attentively, but not too energetically. Then he will gradually attain some degree of concentration. Because of this concentration, his effort will become steady and firm, neither too strong nor too lax.

In some cases, when a meditator has practised meditation for two or three weeks, his concentration becomes very deep and strong, the noting mind notes the object by itself, automatically, and effortlessly. If, however, insufficient effort is put in, the noting mind will gradually become dull and heavy. Hence,

that concentration changes into sloth and torpor or sleepiness. The commentary says:

> If concentration is too strong and effort is too weak, concentration changes into sloth and torpor or sleepiness (*thina-middha*).

So, concentration must be kept in balance with effort (*vīriya*). The passive posture of sitting will only make his mind more concentrated on the object and, as less and less effort is required, the mind will become more and more dull. To keep his concentration in balance with effort, he should practise walking meditation longer than sitting. However, only very few meditators experience concentration that exceeds effort. There are also some meditators whose effort exceeds their concentration. Therefore, concentration must be kept in balance with effort, depending on circumstances.

According to the commentary, we can never say that *sāṭī* is too strong or powerful, because it is best for you to be mindful of each and every activity of mind and body from moment to moment. Then mindfulness becomes constant, sustained, uninterrupted, and continuous, thereby giving rise to deep concentration. When concentration is deep, insight will unfold naturally, and you will be able to realise the mind and body processes (*nāma* and *rūpa*). So, we can say that mindfulness is never too strong or powerful.

According to the Visuddhimagga, there are nine ways to sharpen these five faculties which a meditator must follow.

The First Way is that the meditator must keep in mind that he will realise the disappearance of mental and physical processes or compounded things when he sees them or when he observes them as they really are. That should be the attitude of a meditator. Sometimes a meditator does not believe that every mental and physical process is impermanent, subject to arising and passing away (*aniccā*). Because of this preconception, he

may not be able to realise the true nature of the mind-body processes. Though he may gain some concentration, it would only have enabled him to attain peace and happiness to a limited extent. The commentary says:

> A meditator must keep in mind that he is going to realise the impermanence of existence or mind-body processes if he observes them.

The Second Way is that he must treat the practise of mindfulness with respect, i.e., he must practise mindfulness meditation seriously. If he lacks respect for the technique or the result of meditation, then he will not put enough effort into his practise. Consequently, he cannot concentrate his mind well on the object of meditation. Then he will not be able to realise the true nature of *nāma* and *rūpa*.

The Third Way is that his mindfulness of mental and physical processes must be constant, sustained, uninterrupted, and continuous. Only then can he attain the deep concentration upon which he can build up the insight knowledge which penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical processes. This is a very important point which every meditator must follow. While you are awake, you must constantly and continuously be aware of whatever arises in your mind and body as it really is. Be mindful for the whole day, without a break. When I say "*sāṭī*", it means the constant, sustained, and uninterrupted mindfulness but not ordinary mindfulness.

The Fourth way are the seven kinds of suitability which a meditator depends upon: a suitable meditation hall, food, weather, etc. Whether or not the conditions are suitable, you should make effort in your practise. Sometimes a meditator is very attached to the fan because of the hot weather. He wants to sit under the fan. Actually, a meditator must be indifferent to whether it is cold, warm, or hot; he must not choose.

Mindfulness is actually the source of every achievement. By means of mindfulness, he can change an "enemy" into a

"friend". If he feels hot, he should be mindful of it. If he does so, the heat will gradually become a "friend". Likewise with pain. When he observes it, the concentration becomes stronger and the pain may then seem to be more severe. Actually, it does not become more severe; it is just that the mind, with deep concentration, becomes more sensitive. It knows the pain more and more clearly, making it seem more severe. But when he comes to realise that pain is just a mental process of unpleasant feeling, he will no longer be aware of himself or his bodily form. What he realises at that moment is just the painful sensation and the mind that notes it. He can differentiate between the sensation and the mind that notes it. He does not identify the pain with himself, so the pain does not disturb his concentration. It is like a "friend". Therefore, mindfulness is everything, the source of every achievement. Though you know it theoretically, you should also know it practically. By means of mindfulness, you can turn an "enemy" into a "friend". A mindful meditator has no enemies at all in the world. All phenomena are "friends" because they are conducive to the attainment of insight or enlightenment, the cessation of all suffering.

The Fifth Way is that a meditator must remember the way in which he attained deep concentration. He must remember that way and practise it repeatedly, using the acquired skill to enable him to attain deep concentration.

The Sixth Way is that a meditator must develop the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*). You must develop the seven *bojjhangas*, as and when they are needed, they are: mindfulness, investigation of states, energy, happiness, tranquillity, concentration, and equanimity

The Seventh Way is that you must not be worried about your body or your life. Sometimes, a meditator, who strives very hard in this meditation from four in the morning till nine or ten at night without rest, fears he may become weak. He worries and thinks that if he continues to exert in that way for a month, he may die of fatigue or some illness. Thus, he will not make

sufficient effort in his practise and his mindfulness will not be constant, continuous, and sustained. When mindfulness is interrupted, it cannot cause deep concentration to arise. When concentration is weak, insight knowledge of the true nature of bodily and mental processes will not unfold. That is why the text says that to sharpen these Five Mental Faculties, you must not be concerned about your body and health. Strive to the utmost, practise strenuously for the whole day, without taking a rest or a break, without concern for the body.

The Eighth Way is that whenever mental or physical pain arises, you should strive to note it by putting more effort into your practise. When pain arises, there is a tendency or desire to change position so that it will disappear, because you are reluctant to note it. Instead, you must put more effort into your practise to overcome the pain by being aware of it more energetically, attentively, and precisely. Then, the pain will become your "friend" because it enables you to attain deep concentration and clear insight.

The Ninth Way is that you must not stop half-way to your goal. It means that you must not stop your practise of mindfulness meditation until you achieve Arahantship. Because of your eagerness to achieve Arahantship, you will put proper effort in the practise, thereby making these five mental faculties strong and powerful.

To summarize, these are the nine ways to sharpen the five mental faculties of a meditator:

1. Keep the aim to realise the impermanence of the mental-physical process in mind.
2. Practise the Dhamma seriously and with respect.
3. Maintain constant, uninterrupted, and continuous mindfulness by being aware of all daily activities, moment to moment without a break for the whole day.
4. Seven kinds of suitability must be followed or observed.
5. Remember how to achieve the concentration that you attained previously.

6. Develop the seven Factors of Enlightenment.
7. Do not worry about your bodily health and life during meditation.
8. Overcome physical pain—*dukkhā vedāna*—through strenuous effort in your practise.
9. Do not stop half-way to your goal. That means you must always be striving as long as you have not attained Arahantship.

The Five Factors of a Meditator

In order that a meditator can make progress in his insight meditation, he must have five factors.

The First Factor is faith. A meditator must have a firm and strong faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, especially in the Dhamma which includes the technique of meditation he is practising.

The Second Factor is health. A meditator must be healthy both mentally and physically. If he suffers from headaches, feels dizzy or has stomach trouble, gastric, or any other illness, it does not mean he is not healthy. He is considered to be healthy to the extent that he can observe any mental or physical process. The food he takes must be digestible (i.e. food which does not cause stomach disorders), because if he suffers from indigestion, he will not be able to practise very well.

The Third Factor is honesty. A meditator must be honest and straightforward. That means he must not tell lies to his teacher or to his fellow meditators. Honesty is the best policy.

The Fourth Factor is energy (*vīriya*)—not ordinary energy, but unwavering, strong, and firm energy (*padhana*). A meditator must have this factor for his success in striving for emancipation. He should never let his *vīriya* or effort decrease, but should be perpetually improving or increasing it. When *vīriya* or *padhana* is increasing, mindfulness will become continuous, con-

stant, and uninterrupted. When mindfulness becomes continuous, constant, and uninterrupted, concentration will become deep and strong. Insight will become sharp and penetrative, resulting in the clear comprehension of the mental and physical processes in their true nature.

The Fifth Factor is *paññā* or wisdom. Though we use the word *paññā*, it does not refer to ordinary *paññā* or knowledge. It refers to insight knowledge of the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* (*udayabbaya-ñana*) which is the fourth stage of insight knowledge. The first stage is *nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñana* (knowledge of the difference between mentality and physicality). The second stage is *paccayapariggaha-ñana* (knowledge of causality or knowledge of the law of cause and effect). The third is *sammasana-ñana* (knowledge of comprehension). Knowledge of comprehension means knowledge which penetrates and comprehends all the three characteristics of mental and physical processes, namely, *aniccā, dukkhā* and *anattā*. The fourth stage is *udayabbaya-ñana*, knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena.

The Buddha said that *paññā* here refers to that fourth stage of insight knowledge which penetrates into the appearance and disappearance of mentality and physicality. A meditator is expected to possess this factor. In the beginning, a meditator may not possess this insight knowledge of arising and passing away. But he must strive with *padhana* (strong and firm *vīriya* or effort) to meditate on mental and physical processes to attain the fourth stage of insight knowledge, i.e., *udayabbaya-ñana*, knowledge of arising and passing away. If a meditator possesses this wisdom, he is sure to make progress until he attains at least the lowest Path Knowledge—*sotāpatti-maggā-ñana*. That is why the Buddha said that a meditator must possess the wisdom which realises the appearance and disappearance of mental and physical phenomena. So these are the five factors which a meditator must have.

When a meditator has attained purification of mind, his mind becomes sharp enough to penetrate into the true nature of the mind-body process. Then he distinguishes between the mental and physical process and realises the specific characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. This is the first stage of insight. When he can realise the specific characteristics of mental and physical phenomena and can distinguish between *nāma* and *rūpa*, he can destroy *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* and *atta-diṭṭhi* for the time being. At this stage of insight, he has uprooted *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* and *atta-diṭṭhi*. When he is not experiencing this insight, *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *atta-diṭṭhi* will come back to him, although not strongly. *Sakkāya-diṭṭhi* is only uprooted or exterminated by attaining the first stage of enlightenment, *sotāpatti-maggā-ñana*.

Atta in Brahmanism

We should understand the concepts of *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* and *atta-diṭṭhi* from the point of view of Hinduism.

According to Hinduism or Brahmanism, the whole world was created by Mahābrahma. This Mahābrahma has many names such as, Isvara, Paramatma and Prajapati. "*Pati*" means creator or master. "*Praja*" means creatures or living beings. So he is the master of living beings because he created them.

Paramatma is a Sanskrit or Hindu term. In Pāli it is *paramatta*. When we divide this *paramatma* into two words, it is *parama* and *atma*. Here "*parama*" means the noblest, the holiest; "*atma*" means soul or self. So "*paramatma*" means the "holiest soul". Some translate this word as "the big self" or "big soul". This soul is big enough to create the world and living beings. When the condition of the world was good enough for living beings to live in, he created all living beings—men, devas, Brahmas,, and animals. He even created tigers, lions, and poisonous snakes, which are a great danger to man. When Mahābrahma or Paramatma first created living beings, they were like corpses; they

could not move, sit or stand. Then Mahābrahma wanted to make these creatures come to life. So he put a soul into each creature or living being. Then all the creatures got up and moved, stood, sat, and so on. In this way, that small soul or self existed in every living being according to Brahmanism. Even an insect has a small soul in it. That soul is called *jiva-atta*. It is everlasting and indestructible and cannot be destroyed by any means, even an atomic bomb, because it is supported by Mahābrahma or Prajapati. But when this body is about to disintegrate, that soul knows that the body is about to disintegrate—so it has to be prepared to leave that body and reincarnate into another body. It has to take existence either in a lower or higher world, depending on its *kammā* in this life. If that soul performs meritorious deeds in this life, these meritorious deeds are good *kammā* so they lead the soul to a higher level of existence. When the soul reincarnates into another body, we call it reincarnation. But that everlasting soul, *jiva-atta* or self cannot be destroyed in the next existence either. So the cycle of reincarnation continues. This is what Brahmanism believes about soul. In short, according to Brahmanism, there is an everlasting entity in us, the so-called self, soul or ego.

That belief or concept of an everlasting entity, soul, self or ego, known as *atta-diṭṭhi*, is due to the non-realisation of the true nature of the natural processes.

Atta in Buddhism

We are not Hindus, but we have the concept of a soul, though the concept is not so strong because we follow the doctrine of the Buddha. We understand theoretically that there is no soul or self or that there is no everlasting entity, yet we believe that when a person dies, the soul comes out of the body and stays near his house or his corpse or his coffin. It is a common belief that if we do not make offerings to the monks (Bhikkhus) and

have not shared our meritorious deeds with the departed ones, the soul has to live around us.

Altough we believe the doctrine of the Buddha, we still have this concept of *atta-diṭṭhi*, and based on this concept we have another concept of personality, individuality, a being, a man or a woman—*sakkāya-diṭṭhi* (*sakkāya* here means *nāma* and *rūpa, diṭṭhi* means wrong or false view). We have this concept because we do not comprehend the specific and common characteristics of the mind-body processes; we take them to be everlasting.

If you ask yourself, "Will I die tomorrow?" you dare not answer the question. If I say you are going to die tomorrow, you will get angry with me because you have the idea of permanence of mental and physical processes. You think that your mind-body processes are permanent; at least until tomorrow. Yes, that is the idea of permanence. You hold it because you have not realised the appearance and disappearance of the process of mental and physical phenomena. If you see the constant, instant appearance and disappearance of mental and physical phenomena, you will not believe them to be permanent.

Theoretically, you understand that none of the mental and physical processes lasts even for a second according to the doctrine of the Lord Buddha, but practically you do not believe it because you have not realised their impermanent nature. Only if you have personal experience of the Dhamma, you conclude that it is impermanent. You can then accept, "I may not even live until tomorrow. I may die this very second because every phenomena is subject to impermanence". Actually, when a man has not realised the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, he takes them to be permanent. The idea of personality is based on the belief in a permanent entity within us. So *atta-diṭṭhi* and *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* are the same.

If we say, "Now I am lifting my hand", then you ask me who is lifting the hand. I will say, "I am lifting the hand". Who is that "I"? A Bhikkhu, a man, or a being who is living? If we do not believe in the permanent nature of mind-body processes, we do

not take them to be a being. But actually, the dual process of mentality and physicality, which constitutes a so-called person, is subject to change, arising and passing away, but we do not realise it. We take this dual process to be a person, a being, a dog, or an animal. This view is called *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*. Unless we can rightly comprehend these mental and bodily processes in their true nature, we are unable to overcome or destroy this false view.

That is why the Buddha teaches us to be mindful of any activity of mind and body, or any mental and physical processes as they really are, so that we can realise the two processes as natural processes. This insight is called knowledge of *sabhava-lakkhaṇa* (right understanding of the specific characteristics or individual characteristics of mental and physical phenomena). This insight knowledge destroys the concept of a soul or a self, a person or a being which is the main cause of defilements (*kilesas*), such as greed, anger, delusion, conceit, and so on. So, we can say that this concept of a soul or a self is the seed of all defilements. When we have exterminated the seed there will not arise any defilements and we have got rid of suffering, that is:

sakkāya-diṭṭhi pahanaya sato bhikkhu paribbaje.

"*Sakkāya-diṭṭhi pahanaya*" means to overcome this false view of a soul, a self, or a person; "*sato*" means mindful; Bhikkhu means monk. A Bhikkhu who is mindful of phenomena must strive or practise to overcome the false view. When he is able to destroy that *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*, he is sure to deliver himself from all kinds of suffering. This *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* is the cause of all kinds of defilements or the seed of all defilements. So we have to try to exterminate it through right understanding of mental and physical processes by means of mindfulness meditation.

May all of you practise this mindfulness meditation strenuously and attain the cessation of suffering.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

Appendix—Meditation Guidelines

Moral conduct

Purification of moral conduct is a prerequisite for a meditator to achieve progress in his practise. Only then will he be free from a guilty conscience, be detached, and able to concentrate easily. In a meditation retreat, meditators are required to observe the eight precepts:

1. I undertake the precept to abstain from killing.
2. I undertake the precept to abstain from taking things not given.
3. I undertake the precept to abstain from incelibacy.
4. I undertake the precept to abstain from false speech.
5. I undertake the precept to abstain from taking distilled and fermented liquors and intoxicants.
6. I undertake the precept to abstain from taking food at an improper time.
7. I undertake the precept to abstain from dancing, singing, music, and unseemly shows, from the use of garlands, perfumes, and unguents, and from things that tend to beautify and adorn (the person).
8. I undertake the precept to abstain from using high and luxurious seats and beds.

The Meaning of *Vipassanā*

If a yogi does not understand the purpose of *vipassanā* meditation, he will not try to discover something by his noting of mental and physical processes.

Vipassanā is a compound of two words: "*vi*" and "*passanā*". "*Vi*" means various, i.e., the three characteristics (transiency, unsatisfactoriness, non-self). "*Passanā*" means right understanding or realization by means of mindfulness of mentality and physicality. "*Vipassanā*" therefore means the direct realisation of the three characteristics of mentality and physicality.

Note mindfully

- Note attentively and precisely.
- Superficial noting may make your mind more distracted.
- Note the present, live in the present.
- If you are looking for something while practising, the mind will be in the future.
- The fundamental principle is to observe whatever arises at the very moment it arises.
- "Labelling" is a friend of mindfulness when concentration is weak. If you do not label, you will tend to miss the object. Words are not essential but are sometimes helpful, especially in the beginning. Unless it becomes a hindrance, do not drop labelling.
- It is important to precisely note every mental and physical process—which need to be realized in their true nature.

Sitting Meditation

- When sitting, the body of the meditator should be balanced.

- Do not sit leaning against a wall or other support. This weakens right effort (*samma-vāyama*) and you will feel sleepy.
- Sitting on raised and compressed cushions causes the body to bend forward. This will make you feel sleepy. Sariputta and Mogallana did not use any cushion to meditate.
- Every sitting must be preceded by an hour of walking meditation (this may be reduced when not in retreat and the time available is limited).
- When changing from walking to sitting practise, mindfulness and concentration should not be disrupted.
- In the beginning of the practise, a beginner may be confused as to what to note. The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw instructed that a yogi may start by observing the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, mentally noting "rising" when observing the outward movement, and "falling" when observing the inward movement. This is in accordance with the chapter on the four elements in the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta. The movement of the abdomen is *vayo-dhatu* (wind element). Each element has its individual or specific characteristics:
  - The earth element (*pathavi-dhatu*) has hardness and softness as its specific characteristics.
  - The water element (*apo-dhatu*) has fluidity and cohesion as its specific characteristics.
  - The fire element (*tejo-dhatu*) has heat and cold as its specific characteristics.
  - The wind element (*vayo-dhatu*) has motion, support, and vibration as its specific characteristics.
- When one is mindful of, and realizes the movement of the abdomen, one can be said to rightly understand the real nature of the wind element and destroy the false view of a self.

- In the beginning you may put your hand on the abdomen if you are unable to feel the movement otherwise.
- Breathing must be normal. Do not take quick or deep breaths, you will get tired. Relax the mind and body as much as possible.
- When the abdominal movements are more gradual and clear, you may increase the frequency of the noting: "rising, rising, rising", "falling, falling, falling". If the movements are complicated, just note them generally.
- Although the yogi is taught to begin with the watching of the rise and fall of the abdomen, he must not be attached to it. This is not the only object, but only one of the many varieties of objects of *vipassanā* meditation.
- If sounds are heard, note "hearing". At first it is not easy, but one has to note as much as possible. Only when mindfulness is sufficient, may one return to the primary object of meditation (e.g. "rising" and "falling").
- If there is a gap between "rising" and "falling", fill it with the noting "sitting" and/or "touching".
- Do not open your eyes while doing sitting meditation. If you do, concentration is broken.
- Do not be contented with one hour of sitting. Sit as long as you can.
- Do not shift your posture.

Walking Meditation

- Take the walking meditation seriously. By merely doing walking meditation, one can reach Arahantship! Take the Venerable Subhadda, the last Arahant disciple of the Buddha, as an example.
- Bring your attention to the foot during walking meditation. Note the movement with sharp awareness. In the

beginning, note the step in one part only, mentally note "right" and "left".

- Do not close your eyes but keep them half-closed, looking ahead about four or five feet.
- Do not bend the head too low. This will cause tension and dizziness in a short time.
- Do not look at your feet. Your mind will get distracted.
- When you follow the movement of the foot, you must not lift the feet too high.
- The objects to be noted are gradually increased, that is, the number of parts of a step that are observed is gradually increased.
- Later, one may watch the step in one part for about ten minutes, followed by three parts "lifting, pushing, lowering". Finally it may be further increased to: "intending, lifting, pushing, lowering, touching, pressing".
- Please consider this—within one hour of walking meditation, the mind is sure to wander off quite a few times.
- You must not look around here and there during walking meditation. You have had and will have many years to look around. If you do so during the retreat, you say goodbye to concentration. Take note of the desire to look around. The wandering eye is a very difficult problem for a yogi.
- At least five to six hours each of walking and sitting meditation per day is recommended.

Mindfulness of Daily Activities

- Mindfulness meditation is Buddha's way of life.
- Awareness of daily activities is the life of a yogi. Once the yogi fails to observe an activity he loses his life. That is, he is not a yogi because he is devoid of *sāṭī, samādhi* and *paññ*a.
- Be mindful of each and every daily activity.

- If you cannot be mindful of daily activities, do not expect progress.
- Not noting daily activities leads to wide gaps of non-mindfulness. Continuity is needed to carry mindfulness forward from one moment to the next.
- The faculty of mindfulness (*satindriya*) of a yogi involves constant and uninterrupted mindfulness for the whole day.
- Constant and uninterrupted mindfulness gives rise to deep concentration. Only with deep concentration can one realize the intrinsic nature of mental and physical phenomena, which leads one to the cessation of *dukkhā*.
- There are many new things to discover everyday if you have constant and uninterrupted mindfulness.
- During a retreat, all you have to do is to be mindful. You need not hurry.
- The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw compared a meditator to a sick person who moves about very slowly.
- Doing things extremely slow makes your mind concentrated. If you intend to achieve something in your meditation, you must get accustomed to slowing down.
- When a fan is turning fast, you cannot see it as it really is. If it is turning slowly, you can do so. So you will have to slow down to be able to clearly see the mental and physical processes as they really are.
- When you are surrounded by people who are doing things in a rush, you must be oblivious to the surroundings and energetically note any mental or physical activity.
- Talking is a great danger to the progress of insight. Five minutes talk can wreck a yogi's concentration for the whole day.
- Do not read, recite or recollect. They are hindrances to your meditational progress.

Pain and Patience

- Pain is the friend of a meditator, do not evade it, it can lead you to Nibbāna.
- Pain does not have to inform you of its coming. It may not disappear. If it does, you may cry over it, for your friend has gone away. Some yogis even induce pain by folding their legs beneath them.
- Pain is not observed to make it go away, but to realise its true nature.
- Pain is the key of the door to Nibbāna.
- When concentration is good, pain is not a problem. It is a natural process no different from "rising"—"falling". If you observe it attentively, the mind will be absorbed in it and discover its true nature.
- When pain comes, it is noted directly but ignored only if it becomes overly persistent. It can be overcome by deep concentration which is brought about by continuous mindfulness.
- If there is intense pain while walking, one should stop occasionally and take note of it.
- Patience leads to Nibbāna. Impatience leads to hell.
- Be patient with anything and everything that stimulates your mind.
- Who said anything is enjoyable?

Noting Mental and Emotional States

- If you note any mental or emotional state, it must be done somewhat quickly, energetically, and precisely, so that the noting mind is continuous and becomes powerful. Then the thinking will stop by itself.
- Note the thoughts quickly as if you are hitting them with a stick:

  - "thinking, thinking, thinking", or
  - "sleepy, sleepy, sleepy", or
  - "happy, happy, happy", or
  - "sad, sad, sad ...",

  not slowly as,
  - "thinking ... thinking ...", or
  - "sleepy ... sleepy ..."
- Unless you can note the wandering thought you do not have a hope of concentrating the mind. If your mind is still wandering, it just means that you still do not note energetically enough. This ability is indispensable.
- If you are aware of the content of the thought, it will tend to go on. If you are aware of the thought itself, then thinking will cease.
- Do not be attached to thinking and theory.
- Insight comes with deep concentration, but logical or philosophical thinking comes with shallow concentration.
- Eagerness and worry about getting concentration can cause distraction.
- Drowsiness can be overcome by putting in more effort. Labelling activities to be noted also helps.
- Curiosity and expectation definitely delay your progress. If they arise, do not dwell on them. Give them sharp awareness.
- Note sleepiness energetically—by doing it in quick repetition.
- If you want to achieve something in your meditation, you will have to put more effort into your practise.
- Actually, the energy to note is always there. The trouble is you are reluctant to use it. The mental attitude is very important. Don't be pessimistic. If you are optimistic, you offer yourself opportunity. Then there is satisfaction in every situation and you will also have less distraction.

- If a yogi wakes up at 3:00 a.m., he must get up to meditate. He should not wait until 4:00 a.m. That is not the right attitude.
- If you are sleepy on waking up, get up and walk. Otherwise you will enjoy sleeping. (In the retreat, yogis were scheduled to wake up at 4:00 a.m.)
- If you are sleepy, walk quickly backwards and forwards in the sun.
- A human being has a great variety of strengths and the ability to do many things.
- We must *strive*, not *try*!
- If you put in enough effort, you can achieve the four paths and fruitions.
- One week of practise is just a learning process. Real practise begins only after that.
- Meditation is beyond time and space. So do not be caught up by them.

Interview Sessions

- The yogi has to report daily to the meditation instructor to check on his practise. Having given a report of what he did and experienced during the day's meditation, the instructor will correct, give further instruction or inspire him for further progress. As such, effective communication between them is of extreme importance.
- A yogi should not try to come in before his scheduled time unless he has reason to. On the other hand, it should not be a factor that hinders his meditation. He may come later than scheduled.
- When waiting for your turn within the group, do not waste time. Sit down and be mindful till called. The next one should get ready beside the one being interviewed.

- Yogis should be considerate, especially when there are many other yogis waiting and time is precious. Be concise and to the point. Do not get excited, nervous or afraid. Be composed and open. Speak clearly and audibly in complete sentences. Do not swallow your words, speak in a jumble, or mutter.
- Do not wait for remarks. Only after you have narrated all your experiences will any remarks be made.
- Listen carefully to the instructions and follow them strictly and diligently. If in doubt, ask.
- When asked a question, answer it, do not speak about something else.
- Report experiences even though they may seem unimportant to you.
- Taking short notes immediately after meditation is helpful, but one should not make it a point to remember while meditating, as this will disturb concentration.
- Come and leave the reporting session mindfully.

About the author

The venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw U Janakābhivaṃsa, born 24 July 1928, is a Theravada Buddhist monk from Myanmar.

He was born in Pyinma village, Taungdwingyi Township, British Burma, on Tuesday, 24 July 1928. His parents were U Phyu Min and Daw Shwe Yee. He started to study the Buddhist scriptures at the age of fifteen as a novice monk. He received the higher upasampada ordination in 1947 and continued advanced studies of Buddhist scriptures. He practised Vipassana meditation under the instruction of the most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw from 1953 to 1954. He was then invited by the State Buddha Sasana Organization to be an editor of the Buddhist scriptures in Pali for reciting Buddhist scriptures at the Sixth Buddhist Council in Myanmar.

Starting from 1957, the Venerable Sayadaw spent six years in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he continued his studies of English, Sanskrit, Hindi and Sinhalese languages. He returned to Myanmar in June 1963. At the invitation of the state Buddha Sasana Organisation, he took up residence at Kaba-Aye where he edited the publications of Pali Texts.

In 1967, he was appointed by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw as a meditation teacher at Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Yangon. In 1977 Sayadaw Ashin Janakabhivamsa took up residence at Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Center which was donated to him by some devotees and became the abbot of the center. He has been since then well known as Chanmyay Sayadaw.

In 1979 - 1980 Chanmyay Sayadaw accompanied the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's Dhamma Mission to Europe and the U.S.A. He has undertaken many Dhamma missions to countries in Asia, Europe, and the United States. As recently as July 2015, at the age of 87, he travelled to the UK, Ireland, and Canada giving Dhamma Talks.